AN

# ESSAY

TOWARDS A

## Demonſtrative Proof

OF THE

## DIVINE EXISTENCE,

## UNITY

AND

## ATTRIBUTES.

To which is premiſed

## A SHORT DEFENCE

OF THE

ARGUMENT commonly called *A PRIORI.*

By BENJAMIN HEATH, Eſq;

*Opinionum Commenta delet Dies, Naturæ Judicia confirmat.* CIC. de Nat. Deor.

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TO

# WILLAM OLIVER,

Doctor in Phyſick at *Bath*.

SIR,

OUR Inclination to the Argument which makes the Subject of the following Sheets, and your thorough Acquaintance with it, are the principal Motives which have emboldened me to trouble you with the Patronage of this Eſſay. With regard to the Reception it may meet with in the World, (about which, conſidering the material Kind of Metaphyſicks now in Vogue, I have not too much

much Reaſon to be ſanguine) I am ſenſible it can receive but very little Advantage from the Protection of the greateſt Names: But I look upon it as a very conſiderable one with regard to myſelf, that I am hereby furniſhed with an Opportunity of giving ſo publick a Teſtimony of the high Eſteem I have for your many valuable Qualities, and of the great Reſpect with which I am,

SIR,

*Your moſt Obedient, and*

*Obliged Humble Servant,*

Benjamin Heath.

AN

# ESSAY

TOWARDS

## A Demonſtrative Proof of the Divine Exiſtence, Unity, and Attributes.

THE Exiſtence of a God, that is, of a Supreme All-perfect Being and Firſt Cauſe, the Creator and Governor of the Univerſe, is a Principle which has met with ſo general a Reception in the Belief of Mankind, in all Ages, and among all Nations, that this very univerſal Perſuaſion has been frequently conſidered as an Argument for the Truth of it: And a very ſtrong probable Argument it certainly is. For with any unbiaſſed Perſon, ſo univerſal a Concurrence of Mankind, how widely ſoever divided from each other either by Time or Place, in a Point which carries with it ſuch a Weight and Influence upon their Conduct, and with which their moſt important In-

tereſts are ſo cloſely connected, can lead only to one of theſe two Concluſions: Either that this Concurrence is owing to the evident Truth of the Principle itſelf, wrought in a Manner into the human Nature, and confirmed to it by the conſpiring Teſtimony of every Thing around it: Or, if this Concurrence be ſuppoſed to carry in it no Force at all, then that it is probable that our Underſtandings are not rightly adapted and proportioned to the real Truth of Nature, and that they are not in general, not even with reſpect to Points we are moſt concerned about, and of which we are the moſt fully perſuaded, a right Meaſure of Truth and Falſhood. The natural Conſequence of which would be, that the more generally and clearly any Thing appears to be true to the human Underſtanding, the more Reaſon we ſhould have to ſuſpect that it is really and in Nature falſe: Which Conſequence laying a Foundation for abſolute and univerſal Scepticiſm, the Principle from which it follows may be looked upon as reduced to a ſufficient Abſurdity.

But ſtill indeed it muſt be remembered, that this is but a probable Argument, how ſtrong a Probability ſoever it may be ſuppoſed to infer: For we are ſufficiently convinced by Experience, that Man is however a fallible Creature, and that not only ſingle Men, but great Multitudes, are ſometimes actually deceived and in an Error; ſo that if we had a demonſtrative Proof of the Non-Exiſtence of an All-perfect Being, this Argument would carry little or no Weight againſt it; or if there was barely a very high Probability, ariſing from other Conſiderations, of the Non-Exiſtence of ſuch a Being, the two Probabilities muſt be compared and ballanced together, and we muſt be determined by that which appeared

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to us to be the ſtrongeſt. But tho' the human Underſtanding does frequently err, yet generally and upon the whole, it is more ſuited and proportioned to Truth than to Falſhood; elſe the very Reverſe of our Judgments would be generally the Truth, and we could not do better than to look on Things as directly contrary to what they appear to us: And therefore, where there is no demonſtrative Proof to the contrary, to deny ſome Degree of Force to this Argument, is certainly to deny that the human Nature is rightly ſituated towards Things, or that our Underſtandings are in any Degree at all a proper Meaſure of Truth and Falſhood. There is no Man who, if he has been once thoroughly convinced of the Truth of any Propoſition, does not afterwards conſtantly take it for granted, and both in his Actions and Reaſonings depend upon it as proved, though he has perhaps quite forgotten the Grounds of his former Conviction; and this he does many Times, even in Caſes where he perceives ſtrong preſent Probabilities ariſing in his Mind againſt it. Now if this Confidence in a Man's own Underſtanding be reaſonable (as it muſt be allowed to be, or we could not poſſibly make any Progreſs in Reaſoning at all, but, at the Diſtance of every ſecond or third Concluſion from the Principle whence we ſet out, we muſt be eternally returning back to demonſtrate all over again) 'tis entirely as reaſonable to have a proportionable Confidence in the Underſtandings of other Men, but moſt certainly it is reaſonable to allow ſome Weight to the Underſtandings of almoſt all Men, in all Ages and Nations of the World, conſenting in their Teſtimony to the Truth of any Propoſition, and actually regulating their moſt important Intereſts by it.

The Unity of this Supreme Being and Firſt Cauſe, is a Point, in which Mankind ſeems to have been little leſs generally agreed, than in that of its Exiſtence. That the Perſuaſion of it ſupported itſelf univerſally, amidſt all the Polytheiſm of the antient Heathens, has been made out with the fulleſt Evidence by *Dr. Cudworth* in his *Intellectual Syſtem of the Univerſe*: And the ſame Thing might be eaſily ſhewn, were it neceſſary, with reſpect to almoſt all thoſe Nations which at preſent lie plunged in Idolatry, concerning whom we have any tolerably exact Accounts. So far therefore as this Principle of the Unity of the Supreme Being partakes of the univerſal Conſent of Mankind to its Truth, ſo far the Probability of it muſt be looked upon as ſupported by the Argument drawn from that univerſal Conſent.

But the Argument itſelf from the univerſal Concurrence of Mankind will be exceedingly confirmed, by conſidering the real Ground and Foundation on which it is built, which is no other, for the moſt part, than the Contemplation upon our own Being, and upon all Nature around us. From the actual preſent Exiſtence of any Thing, we are inevitably led up to the Acknowledgment of ſome eternal, neceſſarily-exiſting, and uncauſed Being, the Creator and Governor of the World: From the Obſervation of Reaſon and Underſtanding in ourſelves, we neceſſarily conclude this Being to be a Thinking and Intelligent One; and from thoſe ſtrong Characters of Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, which appear to be every where ſo clearly impreſſed, throughout the magnificent Structure of this Univerſe, we cannot avoid aſcribing to him thoſe Perfections of Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs,

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in a very high and extraordinary Degree, and conſidering him as ſtanding to us in the Relation of the ſupreme and moſt perfect Being. And all theſe Conſiderations taken together do make it ſtill farther exceedingly probable, that this Eternal Being and Firſt Cauſe is alſo All-wiſe, All-mighty, and All-perfect. So far it is pretty clear that the Contemplation on our own and univerſal Nature will carry us, without conſidering what is the Nature of a Self-exiſtent Being, and what are the Conſequences which neceſſarily follow from it.

Farther ſtill, From the Unity of Conduct and Deſign, which is ſo manifeſtly viſible in all thoſe Parts of Nature which fall under our Cognizance, and from their ſeveral reſpective Natures, and the Relations which ariſe from them, all evidently conſpiring together to one grand End and Deſign, the Happineſs, Order, and Perfection of the Whole, we have almoſt as high a Probability, as the Nature of ſuch a Conſideration can poſſibly afford us, that there is but one ſupreme Being, the Creator and Governor of the World, and on whom we ourſelves and all Things depend. But after all it muſt be owned, that this amounts but to a very high Degree of Probability, and not to demonſtrative Knowledge; ſince, if we take not the Nature of a Self-exiſtent Being into the Conſideration, it implies no abſolute Contradiction to ſuppoſe this whole beautiful Creation to have been jointly the Work of many Beings, and not ſimply of one.

Beſides theſe, there is another Kind of Proof of the Divine Exiſtence and Perfections, which is ſtrictly demonſtrative, and indeed the only one that properly is ſo. This is that Train of Reaſoning, by which, ſetting out from the actual

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Exiſtence of ſomething at preſent, we neceſſarily arrive at a firſt Cauſe and Self-exiſtent Being, and from the Conſideration of the Nature of ſuch a Being afterwards infer his other Perfections. This Argument has been handled in two very different Methods. In one of theſe, from the Conſideration of that actual Perception which every Man has in his own Mind, of the Idea of an abſolutely perfect Being, is inferred the actual and neceſſary Exiſtence of ſuch a Being, and from ſuch Exiſtence and abſolute Perfection taken together, all the other Attributes. This Argument *Des Cartes* hath challenged as a Diſcovery of his own, which though perhaps in Strictneſs can hardly be granted him, yet it muſt be owned, that he has placed it in a much ſtronger and clearer Light than was ever done before. The World however has not in general been ſo thoroughly ſatisfied with this Proof, but that many ingenious and rational Men have looked upon it as no better than a Piece of Sophiſtry; to whoſe Objections though I think a clear and ſatisfactory Anſwer might be given, and that the Argument in itſelf is ſtrictly demonſtrative, yet becauſe I don't ſee how any Thing can be added to what has been already offered in its Defence, or how it can be better illuſtrated than has been already done, by *Des Cartes* himſelf, and ſeveral other great Men of his School, I ſhall not inſiſt on it farther in the following Eſſay.

The other Manner of ſtating this Argument is that, in which we are led up from the actual Exiſtence of Something at preſent, to the Neceſſity of admitting a Self-exiſtent Being, and then make the Nature of Self-exiſtence the Principle from which we infer the Unity, and the other Attributes and Perfections. This is that

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Argument which has been managed with ſo great Advantage, and with ſuch Force of Reaſoning, by *Dr. Clarke* in his *Demonſtration of the Being and Attributes of God.* This eminent Writer, however, has not had the good Fortune neither to give ſuch general Satisfaction, but that ſeveral very great Men among his Adverſaries have, not barely denied the Concluſiveneſs of his Reaſoning on this Subject, but alſo the very Principle itſelf on which his Reaſoning is founded; affirming the Notion of Self-exiſtence to contain nothing in it poſitive, and in Truth to be no larger and to imply no more than that of the Word Uncauſed, the natural Conſequence of which, as ſhall be ſhewn hereafter, is, that nothing at all can poſſibly be inferred from it. Indeed, I think, it cannot be denied, but that a great Part of *Dr. Clarke*'s Reaſoning is very liable to Objection, which ſeems principally to have proceeded from theſe Cauſes; partly from his unguarded and inaccurate Manner of expreſſing himſelf, as where he talks of the Ground or Reaſon of the Divine Being as a Principle antecedent in the Order of Nature to, and actually operating towards and determining his Exiſtence; partly from his having connected and entangled the Argument from the Nature of Self-exiſtence, with his own peculiar Notions about Space and Duration, from which it is quite diſtinct, and with which, as ſhall be ſhewn hereafter, it has abſolutely nothing at all to do; and partly from his not fully comprehending, or at leaſt not clearly comprehending the Force of his own Principle, a plain Inſtance of which may be ſeen in his Proof of the Divine Unity, as to which I have met with very few that have been ſatisfied with it, even

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of thoſe who have been thoroughly convinced of the Concluſiveneſs of his Reaſoning in general.

But whether *Dr. Clarke*'s Reaſoning be in every Inſtance concluſive or not, I apprehend it muſt appear evident, to every one that will carefully conſider the Thing, that a demonſtrative Proof of the Divine Unity, as well as of ſeveral other of the Divine Perfections in their juſt and full Extent, cannot be drawn barely from the Conſideration of ourſelves and the World around us, nor can be at all concluded without taking into the Premiſes, either the Conſideration of abſolute Perfection, which is the Medium of *Des Cartes*, or that of the Nature of Self-exiſtence, which is the Medium of *Dr. Clarke*, and that which is intended to be employed in the following Eſſay. A plain Confirmation of what I have been aſſerting may be collected, from the Attempt lately made towards a Proof of the Divine Exiſtence and Attributes, by one of our moſt eminent Metaphyſicians now living, in his *Notes on Archbiſhop* King's *Original of Evil*, p. 46—53, 79—81, where, as he makes no Scruple to own, that upon his Principles the abſolute Unity of the Deity is not to be demonſtrated, and that the moſt that can with Certainty be inferred from them is, that there is but One Being who ſtands to us in the Relation of a God, becauſe we have no Reaſon to ſuppoſe there are any more ſuch Beings exiſting (which is in ſome Sort degrading the Conception of a Deity into a Proportion with the many Gods of the *Gentiles*, as ſuppoſing him to be poſſibly a Deity barely relative to us, and to that Part of the Univerſe which comes within our Notice, juſt as the *Gentiles* ſuppoſed their

their Gods to preſide over the ſeveral Parts of Nature, and the reſpective Kingdoms, Cities, and other Diviſions of this Earth) ſo whoever will carefully examine his Proofs of the other Divine Attributes, will find that, with Reſpect to moſt of them, either his Concluſions are larger than his Premiſes will warrant, or elſe the Conſideration of the Nature of Self-exiſtence, as ſomething poſitive, forces itſelf into his Reaſonings, in ſpite of his utmoſt Endeavours to avoid it. It may be therefore worth while to attempt an Improvement of thoſe Advantages *Dr. Clarke* has left us, towards the Management of this Argument, by trying, if poſſible, to ſet it in a clearer Light, and to diſentangle it from thoſe adventitious Notions of Space and Duration, on which, as it is quite independent, ſo they have been hitherto the chief Cauſes of its Obſcurity, and of the Oppoſition that has been made againſt it. This I ſhall endeavour to do, after I have firſt removed out of the Way ſome Prejudices, which lie againſt this Method of Reaſoning in general, and which I think are principally theſe following.

I. It is objected, that this is a Method of arguing *a priori*, and that an Argument *a priori* to the Exiſtence of a God, as it implies that there is ſome Cauſe prior to the firſt Cauſe, is Nonſenſe and a flat Contradiction. To this I anſwer, that there are two, and but two, Conceptions of an Argument *a priori*; one is an Argument from the Cauſe to the Effect; and to endeavour to prove in this Manner the Exiſtence of a God would undoubtedly be an Abſurdity, as implying that there is in Nature a Cauſe of

a Being which is uncauſed. And as this Kind of Argument is in its Nature applicable only to material and ſenſible Objects, as in the Operations of theſe only is included ſuch a Neceſſity as can be a Foundation for Concluſions of this Sort (all intelligent Beings being free) ſo, as we know nothing of the real and abſolute Nature of ſuch Objects (as might eaſily be ſhewn were this a proper Place for it) but merely their relative Nature as they ſtand to us, it may be made a Queſtion, whether we have Principles ſufficient to bear us out in any Argument of this Kind concerning them, and conſequently whether we can argue with any phyſical Certainty from the Cauſe to the Effect concerning any Thing at all in the World. The other Conception of an Argument *a priori* is, the arguing from the general Nature or Idea of any Thing to its particular Properties, in which, as the general Nature is the Foundation in Reaſoning of the particular Properties, ſo it is ſaid to be antecedent to them in the Order of Reaſoning, or, which comes to the ſame, in the Order of Conception, but is never ſuppoſed to be really and in Nature antecedent to them at all, but, on the contrary, to be perfectly coæval, coincident and identified with them. In this Manner, from the Conſideration of the general Nature of a Triangle, as a trilateral Figure, we infer its particular Properties, as that its three Angles are equal to two right ones, with many others. But in doing this, we do not ſuppoſe this general Nature or Definition of a Triangle to be really and in Nature antecedent to thoſe particular Properties, ſince it implies a Contradiction that it ſhould ever ſubſiſt without them,

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and they are perfectly identified with it: The Caſe is only this, that as the general Nature is the Ground and Foundation, from which in our Reaſoning we ſet out, and proceed to infer them, and as it were build them up, ſo for that Cauſe it is ſaid to be antecedent to them in the Order of Reaſon, that is to ſay in the Order of Proof, and, as nothing can be reaſoned from without being conceived, therefore antecedent in the Order of Conception too. And this ariſes purely from the Imperfection of finite Reaſon, which, as it cannot comprehend and take in all Things, and perhaps ſcarce any one Thing at once and in one View, as perfect Reaſon does, is therefore obliged to proceed ſucceſſively, and by partial Conſiderations, that is, to conſider ſeparately, and one after the other, and in the Way of Inference and Dependence one upon the other, thoſe Things which really and in Nature, and to perfect Reaſon, exiſt all together and at once. And as this Way of Reaſoning does not ſo much as ſuppoſe that in the Nature of Things there is any real Antecedence among the Properties of the ſame Being, they being all coæval and coexiſtent, and ſo inſeparably connected, that, if we knew the whole of any Thing, all its Properties might be as certainly deduced from any one, as from any other of them; ſo with reſpect to our Reaſon it ſuppoſes no other Difference or Priority, than that it is eaſier for us to deduce the ſeveral Properties of a Thing, from its Nature as conſidered under one of them, than as conſidered under another.

Now to apply what has been ſaid to the Matter in Debate: There is but one Argument for

the Exiſtence of a God, that I know of, which can be ſtrictly called an Argument *a priori*, in this latter Senſe; and that is the above-mentioned Argument of *Des Cartes*, wherein, from the Nature or Idea of an All-perfect Being, or, which is the ſame, of abſolute Perfection, is inferred his Exiſtence. But as this Argument, though I think it truly concluſive, is not at preſent intended to be inſiſted upon, I ſhall concern myſelf no farther with it. As to the Argument that is at preſent in Queſtion, it muſt be owned that in Strictneſs it is not an Argument *a priori*, and yet in ſome Senſe it may be ſaid to be ſo too. For as far as from the preſent Exiſtence of Something, it is inferred that Something neceſſarily exiſts, we argue entirely *a poſteriori*; and farther, when from the Nature of neceſſary Exiſtence, and the Impoſſibility of an actually infinite Succeſſion of finite unneceſſary Beings, we conclude that there is ſomething Self-exiſtent, we argue *ab abſurdo*, and conſequently ſo far in Strictneſs this cannot be called an Argument *a priori*; but then when we come to conſider what we mean by ſomething Self-exiſtent, and find that it includes in its Conception a Being, whoſe Nature implies Exiſtence, from whoſe Nature conſequently, if we had an Idea of it ſufficiently full and clear for that Purpoſe, Exiſtence may and muſt be inferred, and conſequently whoſe Exiſtence is demonſtrable from his Nature, that is, whoſe Exiſtence is really, whether we are able to demonſtrate it or not, demonſtrable *a priori*; as ſoon, I ſay, as this appears, we take the Demonſtration *a priori* for granted, as much as if we had actually demon-

monſtrated it ourſelves, and proceed upon it accordingly in the Deduction of the other Attributes. And in this Senſe, tho' not in Strictneſs, this may be called a Proof *a priori*, becauſe it is exactly the ſame to us, and in all its Conſequences, as if it were ſo, from the very Moment it is proved by a Reduction *ad abſurdum*, that the Point is really *a priori* demonſtrable.

And whereas it is commonly ſaid, that in all Beings whatſoever we conſider the *An ſit?* whether they really exiſt at all or not, before we conſider their Nature and Properties, the *Quid ſit?* This is partly not true, and as far as it is true ſignifies only this, that we ſeldom concern ourſelves about the Nature of ſuch Beings, as we have no Reaſon to ſuppoſe have any real Exiſtence: But this is not always true, for we frequently reaſon about the Nature and Properties of Things, as a Circle or Triangle for Inſtance, without enquiring whether a Circle or Triangle ever really exiſted or not; 'tis enough to us that their Exiſtence is poſſible, and as the Poſſibility of their Exiſtence means no more, than that their Nature does not imply a Contradiction, ſo conſequently, in the Order of our Conception, their Nature or *Quid ſit* is antecedent even to the Poſſibility of their Exiſtence, and the latter cannot poſſibly be known without firſt knowing the former. And ſo with regard to the Self-exiſtent Being, ſome Idea of his Nature muſt be antecedent in the Order of our Conception to his Exiſtence, or elſe, when we endeavour to prove his Exiſtence, we endeavour to prove the Exiſtence of we know not what. The Caſe is in Truth no other than this,

this, with reſpect to all finite Beings, whoſe Exiſtence, though actual, is in its Nature however but poſſible, if we did not firſt perceive their Exiſtence, or the Exiſtence of the Parts of which we compound them, we could not poſſibly know any Thing of them at all, nor be apprized of any of their Qualities or Properties: But with reſpect to the all-perfect neceſſarily exiſting Being, as we have no actual immediate Perception of his Exiſtence, as of our own and that of all external Objects, if we had not firſt ſome Idea of his Nature and Attributes (which Idea is drawn indeed from what we obſerve in the Creatures, carried on to Perfection as far as our finite imperfect Faculties are able to reach) 'tis impoſſible we ſhould ever think of, much leſs endeavour to prove, his Exiſtence at all. And as with reſpect to ſome of his Attributes, they cannot be denied to be prior in the Order of our Conception to others of them; becauſe thoſe others are inferred by us from them, and cannot be inferred without preſuppoſing them, as the Unity from the Self-exiſtence and abſolute Perfection, and the moral Attributes from the Intelligence and the Liberty; and yet there is not ſuppoſed to be any real Antecedence or Priority in Nature among theſe Attributes, but that they are all coæval, and coexiſtent, and perfectly identified with the Nature; ſo may the Nature be conſidered as prior in the Order of our Conception to the Exiſtence, without ſuppoſing that it has in Truth any real Priority to it, or that the Nature can be conceived to be without it, any more than the Exiſtence can be conceived to be without the Nature.

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Farther, It is commonly ſaid that the Subſtance is antecedent in the Order of Conception to the Attribute; and ſo it is for this Reaſon, becauſe the Subſtance is not ſomething beſides all the Attributes taken together, but is exactly coincident and identified with them, and conſequently the Conception of it is a more general one, and therefore antecedent to that of any one of the Attributes. If any one imagines his Idea of Subſtance to imply more than all the Attributes (of which Exiſtence, either actual, poſſible, or neceſſary, is always one) taken together, he would do a conſiderable Piece of Service to the World, which has never yet received any ſuch Information, if he would take upon him to explain to it what this *ſomething more* means, wherein it conſiſts, and how we came by the Idea of it. Now with reſpect to the abſolutely perfect Being, Exiſtence is not the Subſtance as above explained, but only one of the Attributes of that Being, and conſequently there is no more Abſurdity in ſuppoſing all the other Attributes we know of him taken togther, (which is what is meant by his Nature, and with reſpect to Exiſtence in the Order of our Conception ſtands for his Subſtance) to be prior in Conception to his Exiſtence, than there is in ſuppoſing his intelligent, active, and free Nature to be prior in Conception to his moral Attributes. And this will appear ſtill the more plainly, if we conſider, that Exiſtence is ſomething which belongs to all Beings whatſoever, as well as the moſt perfect one. If therefore there is any Difference in the Manner of their Exiſtence, this cannot be conceived to proceed from any Thing but from their different Nature, that is,

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from all their other Attributes reſpectively taken together; for from Exiſtence ſimply and barely it cannot proceed, for that is common to them all, and implies no Difference. If then the different Manner of their Exiſtence ariſes from their different Nature, it muſt neceſſarily preſuppoſe it, and conſequently the Divine Nature muſt be prior in the Order of our Conception to his Exiſtence. If it be replied, that from what has been ſaid it follows only, that the Divine Nature is prior in the Order of Conception to the Manner or Mode of his Exiſtence, but that Exiſtence is a more general Idea, and is preſuppoſed by all Manners or Modes of it; I anſwer, that it is properly only a Manner or Mode of Exiſtence that is the Thing in Queſtion. Exiſtence may be conceived either as poſſible, actual, or neceſſary, and if neceſſary Exiſtence is only a Mode or Manner of Exiſtence, actual Exiſtence, as diſtinguiſhed from neceſſary, is but a Mode or Manner of Exiſtence neither. This actual Exiſtence of the Divine Being is the Thing to be proved *a priori*, and if it is proved, by a Reduction *ad abſurdum*, to be implied in his Nature, and demonſtrable from it, the Conſequence is, that the Divine Nature is prior in the Order of Conception to the actual Exiſtence, or in other Words, that the neceſſary Exiſtence is prior in the Order of Conception to the actual. Whether it be prior in Order of Conception to that moſt general and tranſcendental Notion of Exiſtence, under which actual, poſſible, and neceſſary Exiſtence are conſidered only as ſo many Modes, is a Point, I think, of no Relation to the Queſtion in Debate, nor of any Im-

Importance in itſelf, and therefore if any Perſon thinks it to be of any Conſequence, he is heartily welcome to determine it which Way he pleaſes. If it be ſtill farther objected, that the Neceſſity of the Divine Exiſtence, as implied in, and inferred from his Nature, is at moſt but a logical and not a phyſical Neceſſity, I anſwer, that theſe two are always perfectly co-incident; 'tis the very ſame Idea conſidered in two different Manners, abſolutely and relatively: The Neceſſity, as it exiſts abſolutely and in Nature, is called phyſical, and as it is relative to us, and perceived by our Reaſon, is called logical. Thus the Neceſſity by which the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right ones, as it is perceived by us, is but a logical Neceſſity, but it muſt have a phyſical one exactly correſpondent to it, whenever a Triangle really exiſts in Nature, and whoever denies that it muſt be ſo, either in that Caſe or any other whatſoever, denies the Poſſibility of any Knowledge at all, and introduces an univerſal Scepticiſm.

II. It is ſaid that Self-exiſtence is purely a negative Idea, which includes nothing poſitive in it, and that the Word has no larger nor more extenſive Signification than the Words Uncauſed or Unmade. To which I anſwer, that the Words Unmade or Uncauſed, meaning only what has no efficient Cauſe, do indeed ſtand for an Idea purely negative; but that the Word Self-exiſtent, as it denotes ſomething whoſe Nature implies Exiſtence, whoſe Nature it abſolutely is to exiſt; ſomething which exiſts eſſentially, does ſignify an Idea, which is not only poſitive, but, I think, the moſt poſitive of all the Ideas I have,

as there is nothing that is real or poſitive that can be denied of it, either as an Attribute or as an Effect. And a farther Proof of the Poſitiveneſs of this Idea is, that, whereas from a pure Negative nothing poſitive will follow, but what is equivalent to that Negative, from this Idea of Self-exiſtence 'tis eaſy to infer, and hereafter will be inferred, the abſolute Perfection and other Attributes of the Divine Nature. But the Idea which is implied in the Words Unmade or Uncauſed, as far as it is purely negative, is indeed a dead and barren Conception, from which nothing at all can be deduced but itſelf, or what is equivalent to it. For though this Idea has been, by the above-mentioned Author of the *Notes on Archbiſhop King*, made uſe of as a Medium to prove the Infinity or unlimited Nature of the Divine Being, with reſpect to his Power, Knowledge, and other Attributes, yet from the Idea as purely negative, I apprehend, his Concluſion does not follow. For when he argues, that to ſuppoſe this Being limited, is to ſuppoſe him limited by ſome Cauſe, ſince there can be no Limitation without a Limiter; and conſequently to ſuppoſe a Being, which has no Cauſe at all to be limited, is to ſuppoſe an Effect without a Cauſe, he firſt infers from the poſitive Nature of Exiſtence that it implies no Limitation in its Conception, and then evidently runs into a Principle which he would ſeem to avoid, *viz.* that whatever exiſts in any Manner, implies ſome Reaſon in Nature for its Exiſtence in that Manner rather than in any other, diſguiſing his Reaſoning only by calling that an Effect (which neceſſarily implies a Cauſe) which is properly a Manner of Exiſtence, and

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implies only that there is a Reaſon for it: And thus he employs a Medium of Proof, which having before rejected, he is no longer intitled to the Uſe of. For if you ſuppoſe a Being to exiſt, without there being any Reaſon in Nature why it ſhould exiſt rather than not exiſt, and that it is impertinent to ask any Reaſon why ſuch a Being exiſts at all, that Being may as well be ſuppoſed to exiſt in one Manner as in another, to be limited as well as to be unlimited, without any Reaſon at all for ſuch Limitation; and it muſt be every whit as impertinent to expect a Reaſon, why he exiſts in one Manner rather than another, why he is limited rather than unlimited, as to expect one why he exiſts at all.

III. It is ſaid, that if it be neceſſary to ſuppoſe a Reaſon in Nature for the Exiſtence of the Firſt Cauſe, it will be as neceſſary to ſuppoſe a Reaſon for that Reaſon, and a fourth Reaſon for the third, and ſo on *ad infinitum*; and thus we are come about again to the very ſame Abſurdity, of an actually infinite Succeſſion of Cauſes and Effects; to avoid which we were obliged to ſtop at a firſt Cauſe of all Things, himſelf uncauſed. To which I anſwer, that this is not true in the preſent Caſe: For when it has been once ſhewn, that any Property is implied in, and is evidently connected with and follows from, the Nature of any Thing, we muſt neceſſarily ſtop there, the Mind is ſatisfied, and has neither Inclination nor Power to go farther. For if you ſhould repeat over this Nature, as the Cauſe or Reaſon of itſelf, to Infinity, yet, as it will be as often identified with itſelf as it

is repeated, you will not be got one Step farther, than you was at firſt ſetting out; and therefore it is exactly and in every reſpect the ſame Thing to ſtop at firſt, as to run on to Infinity. Thus it is a very reaſonable and proper Queſtion to ask, Why the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right ones? and it would be an impertinent and unſatisfactory Anſwer to ſay, they are ſo becauſe they are ſo; but when it has been once clearly ſhewn, that this is plainly implied in the Nature of a Triangle, and neceſſarily conſequent from it, it would be full as impertinent to go on afterwards asking, why it ſhould be the Nature of a Triangle to have its three Angles equal to two right ones; becauſe, if you ſhould go on asking this Queſtion to Eternity, you can poſſibly have no other Anſwer than this, becauſe it is its Nature, which is no more than what was proved to you before. So it is a very reaſonable Queſtion, to ask why the Firſt Cauſe exiſts; and it would be impertinent to give this for an Anſwer, that he exiſts becauſe he exiſts; for ſuch a Reaſon would in that Caſe be equally applicable to every Being whatſoever; and, if it were ſatisfactory, we could never have arrived at a Firſt Cauſe at all: But when it has been once proved, that Exiſtence is neceſſarily connected with, and implied in, his Nature, it is abſurd to go on asking ſtill, why Exiſtence ſhould be implied in his Nature, or why it ſhould be his Nature to exiſt? becauſe, if you ſhould ask on to Eternity, all the Anſwers that can poſſibly be given you, will be perfectly identified, with that you had already, and with one another, amounting to no more than this, becauſe it is his Nature, and conſequently will

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not bring you a Jot farther than you were got at firſt.

But thoſe very Gentlemen who think it an unreaſonable Queſtion to ask why the Firſt Cauſe exiſts, do themſelves, for fear of one Abſurdity, that of being obliged, as they apprehend, to admit an infinite Succeſſion of Cauſes, really run into another; to avoid which they were at firſt obliged to ſuppoſe any Cauſe at all. For their Reaſoning, as I take it, ſtands thus: There is Something now, therefore there always was Something from Eternity: Why; otherwiſe you muſt ſuppoſe what now exiſts came into Being without any Cauſe at all, which is abſurd. There was always Something neceſſarily exiſting too, or elſe every Thing might as well not have exiſted at all; and if there were no more Reaſon for the Exiſtence of any Thing than for its Non-exiſtence, nothing could ever have exiſted at all. Why? Becauſe that would be to ſuppoſe an Effect without a Cauſe, which is abſurd. Whatever exiſts neceſſarily is either the neceſſary Effect of ſome Cauſe, or is abſolutely Uncauſed; but every Thing is not the neceſſary Effect of ſome Cauſe; becauſe that Suppoſition neceſſarily leads us into an infinite Succeſſion of Cauſes and Effects, which is an Abſurdity: There is Something therefore eternal neceſſarily exiſtent and uncauſed. But this uncauſed Being, what Reaſon is there for his Exiſtence? Why there is abſolutely no other Reaſon in Nature that can poſſibly be given for it, than that this is the firſt Cauſe, and we are obliged to ſtop here, and therefore it is impertinent to ask one. Would not then the following Anſwer be a very reaſonable one in the Mouth of a ſceptical Atheiſt.

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Gentlemen, you have led me a great way about, in order to avoid the Abſurdity of ſuppoſing ſomething to exiſt without any Reaſon; you have at laſt brought me to a Being you call the Firſt Cauſe; and when I ask the Reaſon why he exiſts, you tell me, there is abſolutely in Nature no Reaſon to be given for his Exiſtence rather than for his Non-Exiſtence; if that be the Caſe, you might as well have left me where you found me, and I can as eaſily ſuppoſe myſelf, and every Thing I ſee about me, to exiſt without any Reaſon at all, as this Firſt Cauſe you tell me I am obliged to ſtop at. Remove but the Ambiguity ariſing from the Words, Cauſe and Effect, which you have induſtriouſly thruſt into your Reaſoning, and in doing which you indeed evidently beg the Thing in Queſtion, and inſtead of *Effect*, put *ſomething now exiſting*, inſtead of *Cauſe*, *ſome Reaſon for that Exiſtence*, and it will manifeſtly appear, that I have as much a Right to aſk of you a Reaſon for the Exiſtence of the Being you call the Firſt Cauſe, of which I have no actual Perception, as you can have to aſk me a Reaſon for the Exiſtence of thoſe Things, which we all perceive, and agree to be at preſent exiſting.

Having thus endeavoured to remove the Prejudices which lie againſt the Argument commonly called *a priori*, I ſhall now proceed to the Proof of the Divine Exiſtence, Unity, and Attributes, in the following Propoſitions.

I. Whatever exiſts, there muſt be in Nature a Reaſon why it exiſts rather than not; and if it exiſts in any particular Manner, why it exiſts in that particular Manner, rather than any other

other that that may be aſſigned. This is ſo evident a Principle of Reaſon, and upon which all Reaſoning does ſo abſolutely depend, that, tho' it has been attempted to be cramped by thoſe Gentlemen, who diſapprove of the Argument *a priori*, when applied to the Divine Nature and Attributes, yet ſuch is the Force of Truth, that how fond ſoever they are of removing it out of their Way, they ſtill find themſelves obliged to make uſe of it at every Turn, though inconſiſtently enough with themſelves, as has been ſhewn above. So neceſſary indeed is the Truth of this Axiom, that if you take it away, you take away with it all Reaſon and Reaſoning out of the World, and introduce a Chance, as the preſiding Principle in the Univerſe, infinitely more arbitrary and abſolute than that of *Democritus* and *Epicurus*: For they were obliged to ſuppoſe their Chance combined with Neceſſity, or elſe they would have left themſelves not the leaſt Ground for Reaſoning at all, abſolutely nothing to fix their Foot upon, whereby to move, not the World, but the ſmalleſt Atom in it.

II. There is Something now actually exiſting.

III. There muſt be ſomething neceſſarily exiſting. For if you do not ſuppoſe any Thing to exiſt neceſſarily, then nothing might as well have exiſted; that is, there is no Reaſon in Nature why any Thing does actually exiſt rather than not, and conſequently by the firſt Propoſition, there does nothing actually exiſt: But ſomething does actually exſiſt by Propoſition II. therefore ſomething exiſts neceſſarily.

IV. There

IV. There is ſome Self-exiſtent Being: For whatever exiſts neceſſarily, exiſts either from the Neceſſity of its own Nature, implying in it Exiſtence, or as a neceſſary Effect of ſome Cauſe. To ſuppoſe every Thing to exiſt as the neceſſary Effect of ſome Cauſe, unavoidably leads us to the Suppoſition of a neceſſary infinite Succeſſion of unneceſſary finite Cauſes and Effects, which implies in it a plain Contradiction upon theſe two Accounts. 1. As it ſuppoſes that any Thing actually Infinite can be compounded or made up of Finite Parts: For whatever is made up of Parts, muſt bear ſome Proportion to the Parts it is compounded of, or otherwiſe it could never be made up of them; now there can be no Proportion between Finite and Infinite. And if it is made up of Parts, it muſt be compleated, ſo that no more Parts can be conceived to be added to it, without making it another Thing than what it is; but what is compleated and has all its Parts, cannot be Infinite, ſince the very Notion of Infinite implies ſomething to which new Additions may be for ever conceived, and which conſequently is not, nor ever can be, compleated. 2. As it ſuppoſes that ſomething neceſſarily exiſting can be made up of Parts, neither of which in virtue of its Nature exiſts neceſſarily: For if all and every one of the Parts be unneceſſary, and imply no Neceſſity of Exiſtence in their own Nature, the Whole muſt alſo be unneceſſary, and imply no Neceſſity of Exiſtence in its Nature; or elſe the Whole would not be the Sum of all the Parts taken together, but ſomething entirely diſtinct

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and different from it. There is therefore ſome uncauſed Being, exiſting from the Neceſſity of its own Nature, or whoſe Nature neceſſarily implies and involves in its Exiſtence; Something which exiſts abſolutely and eſſentially, or whoſe very Eſſence is abſolute Exiſtence, and that without Limitation: For Exiſtence implies no Limitation in its Conception; but, on the contrary, is contradicted and denied by it, as far as that Limitation extends, and conſequently all Limitation muſt neceſſarily proceed from ſomething external; to ſuppoſe which, in the preſent Caſe, has been proved to be an Abſurdity. And this ſeems to be the higheſt and moſt peculiar Meaning of that Great Name, which God appropriates to himſelf in the Scriptures; *I AM*; that is, I am Exiſtence itſelf; my very Eſſence and Nature is Exiſtence; and herein I am diſtinguiſhed from all other Beings whatſoever: For with reſpect to all Things elſe, Exiſtence does not properly belong to their Nature. 'Tis an adventitious Property, communicated to them, nor can they partake of it, or continue to enjoy it, any farther than it was at firſt imparted to them, or longer than they are ſupported in it by him, who is the Fountain of all Being. And for this Reaſon it is, that moſt of the antient, and eſpecially of the *Platonick*, *Theiſtical* Philoſophers would not allow any Finite dependent Beings to be real Exiſtences, οὐλως οὐλα, at all; by which they meant no more than this, that actual Exiſtence was not really and in Truth any Property of their Nature, but only a Ray and Communication from him, in whom all Fullneſs of Being dwells.

V. The Self-Exiſtent Being is abſolutely Perfect: That is, the whole Fulneſs of Being muſt be aſcribed to him; Being and Perfection being Terms ſynonymous and coincident. If therefore you can ſuppoſe the Nature of the Self-Exiſtent Being to want any poſſible Reality or Perfection, then is his Nature and Eſſence not abſolute Exiſtence, but Exiſtence determined in this or that certain particular Manner: But it was proved in the laſt foregoing Propoſition, that there is ſome Being whoſe Nature and Eſſence is abſolute Exiſtence; therefore there is ſome Being abſolutely perfect. Otherwiſe thus: If there be any Kind or Degree of Reality or Perfection, which cannot be aſcribed to the Self-Exiſtent Being, then muſt the Nature and Eſſence of that Being be ſo far limited; now whatever is limited, is limited either by Virtue of its Cauſe, or by its own Nature: But the Nature of the Self-Exiſtent Being cannot be limited by Virtue of its Cauſe, becauſe by the Suppoſition it is abſolutely Uncauſed; if it be limited at all then, it muſt be limited by itſelf: Now when we ſay a Nature is limited by itſelf, all we can poſſibly mean by it is, that it implies a Contradiction that it ſhould be any other Mode of Exiſtence than juſt what it is, or poſſeſs any other Properties than what actually belong to and are conſiſtent with it: Thus it implies a Contradiction that a Circle ſhould be a Triangle, or poſſeſs any of the peculiar Properties of a Triangle, or that a Triangle ſhould be a Square, or poſſeſs any of the peculiar Properties of a Square. But the Nature of the Self-Exiſtent Being cannot poſſibly be limited

mited by itſelf in this Senſe, ſince to Exiſtence abſolutely, which has been proved to be implied in the Nature of ſuch a Being, no real Exiſtence, no eſſential Perfection, can be, but on the contrary, every Thing that ſignifies Non-Exiſtence and Imperfection (as all Limitation manifeſtly and neceſſarily does) muſt be a direct Contradiction. The Self-Exiſtent Being is therefore abſolutely Perfect. And this Attribute too ſeems to be comprehended in that Divine Name, *I AM*; I am abſolute Perfection; my Nature comprehends the univerſal Fulneſs of Perfection and Exiſtence; by which Attribute I am alſo diſtinguiſhed from all other Beings, who, as their Exiſtence is communicated, ſo their Perfections are neceſſarily limited, by the Efficiency of that Great and Firſt Cauſe, from whom they proceed.

VI. The abſolutely Perfect Being is but one. For as one ſuch Being poſſeſſeth the whole Fulneſs of Being, all poſſible Perfection and Exiſtence, if you ſuppoſe more ſuch Beings than one to exiſt, you only ſuppoſe it in Words, but do not ſuppoſe there is really any more Being in the World than if there were but one. For if there is really more Being, upon the Suppoſition of a hundred ſuch Beings, than merely upon the Suppoſition of one, then the ninety-nine have ſome Being, ſome Perfection, which the one has not, which is contrary to the laſt foregoing Propoſition; ſo that to aſſert more than one abſolutely perfect Being, is to run into the ſame Contradiction as will follow from aſſerting, that one added a hundred Times to itſelf is ſtill equal but to one, or that one and a

hundred are exactly equal. If it be ſaid, that the ninety nine, tho' they have no Perfection different in Kind or Degree from the one, may yet have Perfections different in Number; I anſwer, that where any Perfection is abſolute in its Kind, it can admit of no Variety in Number, becauſe Number is only applicable to Things that are increaſable, or capable of Addition, and conſequently imperfect: For to ſuppoſe any Thing abſolute or perfect to be capable of Increaſe, implies a Contradiction; and to ſuppoſe Number applicable to what is not increaſable, is another Contradiction, as implying that a Thing may be doubled and trebled, and at the ſame Time not increaſed. This will appear perhaps ſtill plainer, if we conſider any one of the Divine Perfections ſeparately; as Power for inſtance. If you ſuppoſe one Being to be Omnipotent, to poſſeſs all conceivable Power in its abſolute Fulneſs and Extent, and if afterwards you were to add a hundred Omnipotences more, you add them only in Words, in Reality you add nothing; for they are all perfectly identified with the Firſt, and Power is not at all increaſed by them; ſo that they really are as nothing, and conſequently there can be but one Omnipotence. The Caſe will be exactly the ſame with Knowledge, and every other Perfection that is conceivable; and as all poſſible or conceivable Perfections taken together are identified with the All-perfect Being himſelf, 'tis an unavoidable Conſequence that there can be but One ſuch Being.

This Truth may be perhaps alſo illuſtrated in this Manner: If you ſuppoſe a hundred abſolutely perfect Beings, each of them has a perfect and adequate Idea of himſelf, and of every

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one of the others: Now, as there cannot poſſibly be the leaſt Difference or Diſtinction between theſe hundred Beings in Nature (for if you ſuppoſe any one Being to be in any reſpect different from any other, it muſt be by having ſome Perfection which that other hath not, which is contrary to the Suppoſition) ſo the Ideas of them all muſt be perfectly one and the ſame, coincident and identified with each other; to ſuppoſe which, is to ſuppoſe, that the very ſame Idea is at the very ſame Time one and a hundred, which is a Contradiction; and it is to ſuppoſe too, that to each of theſe Beings, the Idea of itſelf is perfectly identified with, and no way, not even in Conception, diſtinguiſhed from the Ideas of the other ninety nine, which is alſo a Contradiction. There is therefore but one abſolutely perfect Being, and Unity is neceſſarily connected with Perfection, as Number and Variety are the inevitable Conſequences of Limitation and Imperfection. I have dwelt the longer on the Proof of this Propoſition, and endeavoured to place it in a Variety of Lights (which Variety any Perſon if he pleaſes will be able to carry on a great deal farther) becauſe, as *Dr. Clarke*'s Proof of the Divine Unity has given very little general Satisfaction; and, if not indeed defective (which I think it might be eaſily ſhewn to be) cannot be denied to be expreſſed with a great deal of Obſcurity and Confuſion; ſo it ſeems to be a growing Opinion, that the abſolute Unity of the Divine Being is not at all capable of being demonſtrated. An Opinion, which has at the ſame Time this Inconvenience attending it, that, as far as it prevails, it neceſſarily leſſens even the Probability of this Truth, with

with all thoſe (which are the greateſt Part of Mankind) that receive and believe it in great meaſure upon the Authority of others; at leaſt, as far as this Probability is founded in Authority purely human, and excluſive of a Revelation.

VII. The Self-Exiſtent and All-Perfect Being is independent: For a Being which is abſolutely uncauſed, whoſe Exiſtence and Perfections are implied in his own Nature and Eſſence, and to whom all conceivable Reality and Perfection muſt neceſſarily be aſcribed without any Limitation, cannot, without a Contradiction, be ſuppoſed to depend upon any Thing elſe, either for his Exiſtence, or Perfections, or the Exerciſe of them.

VIII. The Self-Exiſtent and All-Perfect Being is immutable: For to ſuppoſe a Being who poſſeſſes all real Exiſtence and Perfection, and in whoſe Nature all his Perfections are implied, with the ſame Neceſſity as it is implied in the Nature of a Triangle, that its three Angles are equal to two Right ones, to exiſt at any one Time in a different Manner than he does at another; or that his Perfections are capable of Addition, Diminution, or Change, in any conceivable Reſpect whatſoever, is to run into the ſame Contradiction as would follow from aſſerting, that there may poſſibly be a Triangle, whoſe three Angles ſhould not be equal to, but greater or leſs than two Right ones.

IX. The Self-Exiſtent and All-Perfect Being is Eternal: For his very Nature and Eſſence being to Exiſt, 'tis as impoſſible that he ſhould ever not

not Exiſt, as it is, that there ſhould be a Five-Angled-Triangle, or a Square Circle. To ſuppoſe that he formerly might not have exiſted, or at ſome future Time may ceaſe to exiſt, is exactly the ſame Abſurdity as it would be to ſuppoſe, that though at preſent, the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two Right ones, yet that perhaps formerly they might have been bigger, and ſome time hence they may poſſibly be leſs. But here, for the better underſtanding this Attribute, I think it neceſſary to obſerve, that as whatever is received, is received according to the Capacity of the Recipient; ſo it implies a Contradiction, that any Finite Imperfect Being ſhould have a compleat and adequate Conception of what is abſolute and perfect. All that is poſſible for a Finite Imagination to do in this Caſe, is to add a great many finite Portions of Time together, and to ſuppoſe, that adding them on without End, its Conception will ſtill never be able to reach, or be commenſurate to what is perfect. Thus, I ſay, the Caſe ſtands to the Imagination of an imperfect Being; and this is what indeed it is apt enough to be ſatisfied with, as a Sort of poſitive Conception of perfect Eternity, though it really amounts to no more than a Conception of its own Impotence, and a Conviction, after ſome few Attempts towards it, of the utter Impoſſibility there is, that it ſhould be ever able adequately and poſitively to comprehend abſolute Perfection. But the Caſe ſtands quite otherwiſe to the Reaſon of ſuch a Being: Reaſon neceſſarily concludes, that what is abſolute and perfect, exiſts in a manner proportioned to itſelf, and not to what is Finite and Imperfect; and that all our weak Attempts towards the Conception of it, even though they could

could be ſuppoſed to be carried on to Infinity, will ſtill not be identified with, and commenſurate to it: For Imperfection, if it could poſſibly be carried on to Infinity, would not yet make up Perfection; and this indeed ſhews the Abſurdity of admitting that any Finite Conception whatever, as Number, Time, Place, Diviſibility, or what you pleaſe, can be actually and poſitively carried into Infinity; for 'tis exactly the ſame, as ſuppoſing that, by adding a Number of Negatives together, the Sum will be at laſt ſomething poſitive. For every Finite that can be added, is as a Negative to poſitive Infinity; that is, it bears no Proportion to it, and by adding it, you approach no nearer to it than you were before. The Abſurdity of this compound poſitive Infinity, as applied to Number, is ſo evident, that though the ſuppoſed Infinity of Number be really the Foundation of all other compound Infinites whatſoever, yet, I believe, very few, if any, Perſons can be found, who have ventured to aſſert that a Number actually Infinite exiſts, becauſe it implies this plain Contradiction, that it is aſſerting it to be abſolutely incapable of Increaſe, at the ſame Time that its being incapable of Increaſe is ſuppoſed to imply a Contradiction. For this is the very Eſſence of our Notion of Infinity, when attributed to any Idea; that it is for ever capable of being increaſed, without a Poſſibility of ever coming to the End of that Increaſe; and by aſſerting the actual Exiſtence of that Idea as Infinite, you take away all Poſſibility of increaſing it, ſince nothing, that will ſtill admit of farther Increaſe, can be actually Infinite. And the ſame Contradiction will equally hold in all compound Infinities whatſoever. Nor is the Matter at all

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ſalved by ſaying, that nothing Finite ought to be conſidered as an *Aliquot* part of what is Infinite; but, on the contrary, this is evidently giving up the Point in Diſpute. For if nothing which is Finite can be conſidered as an *Aliquot*, or conſtituent Part of what is actually Infinite, then is it evident, that actual poſitive Infinity cannot be aſcribed to any Thing that is compounded and made up of finite conſtituent Parts. Conſequently it cannot be aſcribed to Number increaſing; for all Number increaſing is compounded of ſuch Parts: Nor to Diviſibility; for that is only Number leſſening, or a Unite broke into Fractions: Nor to Extenſion; for that too is evidently compounded of Parts, and its ſuppoſed Infinity is nothing more than the Capacity we perceive in ourſelves of adding theſe Parts to one another, or increaſing the Number of them, without End: Nor to Time, which, being ſucceſſive Duration, conſiſts of Parts too; Succeſſion being nothing elſe but the continued Addition of theſe Parts one to the other, and its ſuppoſed Infinity nothing but the Incapacity we feel of ever coming to an End of this Addition: Nor indeed to any Thing elſe whatſoever which is compounded of Parts; every ſuch Idea being in its very Nature indefinitely increaſeable, by the Application of Number to it, though, like Number, utterly incapable of poſitive Infinity, or, which is a more proper Expreſſion, of abſolute Perfection.

The Divine Eternity is not then an infinite ſucceſſive Duration, ſince it has been ſhewn, that ſuch an infinite Succeſſion implies a Contradiction. Time, or ſucceſſive Duration, is not the Attribute, but the Creature of the All-perfect Being. It is a

neceſſary Conſequence from the Suppoſition of the Exiſtence of finite Beings. For whatſoever is limited, is limited in every Reſpect; 'tis limited in its Exiſtence, limited in its Power, limited in its Knowledge, and limited in its Duration. By ſaying which, I would not be underſtood to mean, that it is impoſſible that any finite Being ſhould be immortal, as it is that it ſhould be eternal; for conceive it as immortal as you pleaſe, its Duration will ſtill be never poſitively and actually Infinite: But I mean by it farther, that its Exiſtence is never the ſame, but perpetually changing and flowing. Not only our Bodies, but our Minds are continually upon the Flow. As one Particle of Matter thruſts out another, and takes its Place in our Bodies, ſo one Thought thruſts on another, and ſucceeds to it in our Minds; ſo that we are not abſolutely the ſame Beings any two Moments with reſpect to either, and may not improperly be ſaid to be perpetually dying and being born; dying to what we were the laſt Moment, and being born to what we are the preſent one. And the Caſe muſt be the ſame with all finite Beings whatſoever: There is, and can be, but one unchangeable Being, becauſe there can be but one who poſſeſſeth the whole Fulneſs of Perfection, and who is conſequently the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and forever, and with him there is no Variableneſs nor Shadow of Change. And as it is the Perception of this continual Change made in our Beings, and thoſe of all finite Nature around us; of this Succeſſion of ourſelves of one Moment to ourſelves of the next, and of all Things which fall within the Reach of our Senſes to one another, that conſtitutes the very Eſſence of our Idea of ſucceſſive Duration or Time; ſo, from the abſo-

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lute Immutability of the Divine Nature, we are furniſhed with another demonſtrative Proof, that ſucceſſive Duration, even though we could ſuppoſe it actually Infinite, can yet not be attributed to the All-perfect Being, becauſe in his Nature there is no Succeſſion or Change, but he is ever abſolutely one and the ſame.

Well; but it may be asked, if the Divine Eternity be not infinite ſucceſſive Duration, what is it? What Idea have you of it? I anſwer, no Picture of it at all in my Imagination; for I can imagine nothing that is perfect, nothing but what is imperfect and limited. All the Aſſiſtance our Imagination can give us, is not to affirm, but to deny: I can ſay no more than this, That there never was, nor will be, a Time when God is not. Our Reaſon aſſures us, indeed, that by an All-perfect Underſtanding, this Attribute muſt be conceived as poſitive and abſolute; but, by reaſon of its own Imperfection, it cannot aſſiſt us any farther towards a poſitive Conception of it, than by conſidering it as ſomething very much alike and equivalent to abſolute and neceſſary Exiſtence.

Nor is the Argument, which *Dr. Clarke* draws, from the ſeeming neceſſary Infinity of Duration, which ſtill forceth itſelf upon our Minds, in ſpite of our utmoſt Endeavours to deny and remove it, to the neceſſary Exiſtence of an infinitely enduring or eternal Being, a Being of whom he conſiders infinite Duration to be as one Attribute, one Jot leſs concluſive on my Principles, than it is on his. For, from the Succeſſion we perceive in ourſelves, and all other Beings around us, having got the Notion of Time, we at the ſame Time perceive in ourſelves a Power

of increaſing it, either backwards or forwards, without the Poſſibility of the leaſt Boundary or Stop either Way ; that is, of carrying the Poſſibility of Beings ſucceeding themſelves and each other, as far backwards and forwards as we pleaſe, without ever meeting any Thing in our Way, which ſtops or denies this Poſſibility ; the natural Conſequence of which is, that there muſt always be a Power exiſting, equal to the Production of thoſe Beings, and in Virtue of which they, and all other conceivable Beings, are poſſible. Now that Power by which all conceivable Beings are rendered poſſible, muſt be the Power of the All-perfect Being, ſince the Perfection of that Being, as conceived under the Attribute of Power, conſiſts in this, that it is equal to the Production of all Things conceivable, or which do not imply a Contradiction. The All-perfect Omnipotent Being muſt therefore eternally exiſt.

X. The All-perfect Being is omnipotent ; for as Being and Power are neceſſarily in exact Proportion to each other, every Thing having more or leſs Power, in proportion as it partakes more or leſs of Being or Perfection ; that Being which poſſeſſeth the whole Fulneſs of Perfection, and of whom no real Perfection can be denied, muſt poſſeſs the abſolute Fulneſs of Power, and no real Power can be denied of him : That is, he poſſeſſeth all Power which is conceivable, a Power to effect every Thing which doth not imply a Contradiction. To do any Thing which implieth a Contradiction is not indeed in his Power, for that would be a Power to do nothing ; for every Contradiction is really nothing. A ſquare Circle, a Triangle, whoſe three Angles are greater or leſs

leſs than two right ones, or a Part which is bigger than its Whole, are only Words, but they ſignify and ſtand for nothing. For what is given with one Hand, is taken away again with the other; ſo that upon the Balance nothing remains: And thoſe Inſtances, which are mentioned above amount to no more than this, a Circle and not a Circle, a Triangle and not a Triangle, a Part and not a Part; that is, juſt nothing at all.

By Virtue of this Divine Attribute exerted it is, that all finite Beings which exiſt, are; for Exiſtence, as hath been ſhewn before, is implied in the Nature of no finite Being whatſoever. Whatever Nature implies, it muſt be abſolute, unlimited and perfect, as the Idea of Exiſtence itſelf is. All that the Nature of a finite Being can imply, is no more than a bare Poſſibility of Exiſtence, that is, that the Exiſtence of ſuch a Being carries no Contradiction with it; and as the Divine Power has been proved to extend to every Thing that doth not imply a Contradiction, ſo conſequently doth it extend to the Creation of finite Beings. And as it is merely in Virtue of their being created by this Divine Power, that they firſt began to exiſt, ſo is it in Virtue of the ſame Power continually exerted, that they continue in Being: For we muſt not conceive, that whenever a Being once exiſts, it will continue to exiſt from its own Nature ever afterwards: On the contrary, if its Being were at firſt derived, take away the Cauſe from which it was derived, and the Effect, its Exiſtence, immediately ceaſes with it. If the Caſe be ſuppoſed to be otherwiſe, then, either it is a Contradiction to ſuppoſe this derived Being to ceaſe to exiſt, after the Cauſe, from which it is derived, is withdrawn, or it is not.

not. If it be no Contradiction to ſuppoſe it in ſuch a Caſe to ceaſe to exiſt, then it may as well ceaſe to exiſt as continue to exiſt, and if it may, it muſt ceaſe to exiſt; or if you ſuppoſe it, on the contrary, notwithſtanding ſtill to continue to exiſt, it will continue to exiſt without abſolutely any Reaſon at all for its Exiſtence (for if there be a ſufficient Reaſon for its Exiſtence, it muſt be a Contradiction for it not to exiſt) which is contrary to the firſt Propoſition. If you ſay it is a Contradiction to ſuppoſe it, when once exiſting, to ceaſe to exiſt, after the Cauſe whence its Exiſtence was at firſt derived, is withdrawn, then in the firſt Place, it cannot poſſibly be annihilated; for there is no Power that can work Contradictions. Secondly, it muſt be immutable; for, by the ſame Reaſon by which it exiſts, and it is a Contradiction for it not to exiſt it, exiſts abſolutely what it is, and nothing elſe, and it muſt be equally a Contradiction to ſuppoſe it to exiſt in any other Manner. But on the contrary, all finite Beings are in a perpetual Flux and Change, and not preciſely the ſame any two Moments. And laſtly, it will follow, that the All-perfect Being cannot communicate Exiſtence to poſſible limited Natures, without communicating to them at the ſame Time his own peculiar Attribute Self-Exiſtence, with all the Privileges and Perfections that follow from it, which is the greateſt of all Contradictions. The Act of Preſervation is therefore a continual Creation; or, the ſame Power by which any Thing was at firſt brought into Being, muſt of Neceſſity be continually exerted to ſupport it in Being.

XI. The All-perfect Being is Omnipreſent; he is intimately preſent to himſelf and his own Perfections, for that neceſſarily follows from the Nature of all

all Being: And he is intimately preſent to all his Creatures, ſince it is from his Power that they continually receive their Being. But here we muſt take care not to conceive the divine Omnipreſence under the Notion of infinite Extenſion, or infinite Space, which amounts to the ſame, and is of late become a favourite Notion, ſince that would be a Conception of it altogether unworthy of the divine Perfection: For we get the Idea of Space or Extenſion purely from ſenſible Objects, in this Manner: From the Obſervation of the Order and Relation in which theſe Beings, and the ſeveral Parts of them, ſtand to each other, we get the Idea of Place; and as we perceive in our Minds a Poſſibility of adding ſtill more of theſe Beings, to thoſe which fall within the Cognizance of our Senſes, and more again ſtill to them, and ſo onwards indefinitely, without meeting with any Thing to ſtop or limit our Progreſs; ſo the Poſſibility of theſe Relations of the Beings themſelves, and of the Parts of each of them, to each other, conſtantly accompanieth us in our Progreſs; and no ſooner are any more Beings ſuppoſed or added, but more of theſe Relations are neceſſarily ſuppoſed and added with them; and thus we get the Idea of Space or Extenſion indefinite. And as none of theſe ſenble Beings neceſſarily imply Exiſtence in their Natures, ſo that they may as well be conceived not to exiſt at all as to exiſt; they may be all ſuppoſed to be removed out of Exiſtence: But as their Natures do imply at the ſame Time Poſſibility, the Poſſibility of their Exiſtence cannot be removed or taken away, nor, conſequently, can we remove or take away the Poſſibility of their ſeveral Relations to each other, and of the Relations of their ſeveral Parts among them-

themſelves, which, on the contrary, will conſtantly and neceſſarily accompany the Poſſibility of their Exiſtence: And thus we get the Idea of a *Vacuum* or empty Space.

Now whereas it is ſaid, that it is impoſſible to divide and ſeparate the Parts of Space from each other, ſo much as even in Thought, the ſame will hold exactly of the Poſſibility of the Exiſtence of theſe Relations. For if you uſe your utmoſt Efforts to divide and draw aſunder this Poſſibility, it will ſignify abſolutely nothing; for the ſame Poſſibility will inſtantly ſpring up again between; and that for this very good Reaſon, that if it were poſſible to divide and draw it aſunder, you would be able at laſt to draw it out of Nature, which implies a Contradiction: For the Poſſibility of the Exiſtence of ſenſible Beings is founded in their Nature, to which it carries no Contradiction to conceive them as exiſting; and therefore this Poſſibility cannot be taken away without a Contradiction; conſequently, whenever you attempt it, Nature mocks your Efforts, and immediately ſubſtitutes itſelf again in the Place of what you have taken away.

And whereas it is farther ſaid, that the Parts of Space are abſolutely immoveable; *Moveantur hæ de locis ſuis, et movebuntur, ut ita dicam, de ſeipſis*; the ſame will hold exactly too of this Poſſibility. For as it is a perfectly uniform and ſimple Thing, try to move any partial Conſideration of it, and to make it change its Situation with reſpect to the reſt, and you will perceive ſomething inſtantly come into the Room of it, perfectly the ſame, and abſolutely undiſtinguiſhable from it. Endeavour to take away any one Poſſibility, and Nature will inſtantly ſupply you with

with an exact Counterpart or Twin to it; and that for the Reaſon mentioned before, becauſe Dividing and Moving is an Attempt towards denying ſo far as you divide or move; and that is what Nature will not bear, becauſe it is, as hath been ſaid, a Contradiction.

But it will be ſtill farther ſaid, that a Poſſibility is nothing real, and nothing but what is real can have real poſitive Properties. Now Space has real poſitive Properties, ſuch as Length, Breadth, and Depth. To this I anſwer, That where ſenſible Beings are ſuppoſed exiſting, Length, Depth, and Breadth, are Relations ariſing from the Order in which thoſe Beings, and their ſeveral Parts, ſtand to each other: But upon the Suppoſition of their being all removed out of Nature, as it is not ſuppoſed that there remains a Line, a Surface, or a Cube barely, but ſimple, uniform, indefinite Space; ſo I ſay, that upon the ſame Suppoſition, there will remain nothing but an uniform indefinite Poſſibility of ſuch Beings exiſting again with their ſeveral Relations, which Poſſibility, though I cannot actually arrive at the utmoſt Bounds of, yet I can conſider partially: For I can conſider the Poſſibility of theſe Beings exiſting again upon the ſame Line, one after the other, indefinitely, and then there will be Length; or I can conſider them as poſſibly exiſting again, upon Lines interſecting the firſt at right Angles, and then there will be Breadth too; and I can ſtill farther conſider them as exiſting again in Lines interſecting the former ones at their common Interſections at right Angles, and then there will be Depth too; ſo that, in Truth, Length, Depth, and Breadth, are not properly and really Properties of Space, but only ſo many partial Conſiderations of it.

Again, it is ſaid, that Space is neceſſarily exiſtent; but if Space be no more than the conceived Poſſibility of the Relations of ſenſible Objects to each other, if the Poſſibility of their Exiſtence be conceived as neceſſary, the Poſſibility of their Relations muſt be ſo too. Now the Poſſibility of their Exiſtence is neceſſary, becauſe, as has been ſhewn before, to ſuppoſe the Impoſſibility of their Exiſtence is a Contradiction; for to ſuppoſe any Thing abſolutely impoſſible, is to ſuppoſe it to imply a Contradiction: But the Nature of finite ſenſible Objects, does not imply a Contradiction to Exiſtence; therefore the Exiſtence of ſuch Objects is not impoſſible, and it muſt imply a Contradiction to ſuppoſe it ſo. And whereas it is added too, that Space is eternal; this amounts to no more than what has been already conſidered under Prop. X. that as we can carry this Poſſibility of the Exiſtence of ſenſible Beings backwards and forwards through Duration indefinitely, without meeting any Thing in our Way to ſtop or bound our Progreſs; ſo the Poſſibility of the Relations of theſe Beings will conſtantly and neceſſarily attend the Poſſibility of their Exiſtence, whitherſoever we carry it. But a very good Argument may be drawn from the Nature of indefinite Space, as it is above explained, to the Exiſtence of an all-perfect Omnipotent Being, which becauſe it is exactly parallel to that drawn from the Nature of indefinite ſucceſſive Duration in Prop. X. I ſhall not here repeat, not doubting but every one who comprehends the former, will be readily able to make it out for himſelf.

Having thus explained the Nature of Extenſion or Space, and ſhewn, that as far as it falls under the Cognizance of our Senſes, it is no more than

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the Relation in which ſenſible Beings, and their ſeveral Parts ſtand to each other; and that as far as it is carried beyond Senſe by our Imagination, even indefinitely, it is no more than the conceived Poſſibility of the Relations of ſenſible Beings, and their Parts, to each other, founded upon, and ſpringing up out of the conceived Poſſibility of the Exiſtence of thoſe ſenſible Beings themſelves; it may be eaſily ſeen, that this can be no proper Repreſentation or Conception of the divine Immenſity. The ſame Thing might be eaſily proved from the Nature of Extenſion, as compounded and made up of finite Parts, which therefore, as has been ſhewn under Prop. X. can be only indefinite, that is to ſay, infinite relatively to us, or negatively, but not poſitively, infinite, or abſolutely perfect. And it might be proved too from Extenſion being a Quality that falls under the Cognizance of our Senſes; and therefore to ſuppoſe it to be identified with the divine Omnipreſence, would be to ſuppoſe the divine Nature to be the Object of our Senſes; and as whatever is the Object of our Senſes is properly Body or Matter, it would be to ſuppoſe the divine Being to be corporeal, the Abſurdity of which may be partly collected from what has been ſaid under Prop. X. relating to Infinity, as applied to compounded Beings, and will be more fully manifeſted when we come to conſider the Simplicity of the divine Nature. If it be asked, What then is the proper Conception of the divine Immenſity? I anſwer, that our Imaginations can help us to nothing poſitive in this Matter, only negatively, we may be ſure there is no Being to whom God is not moſt intimately preſent; and all the Aſſiſtance our imperfect Reaſon can give us towards a poſi-

tive Conception of it, will be perhaps beſt employed on conceiving it under the Notion of abſolute or perfect Exiſtence.

XII. The All-perfect Being is Omniſcient. For as Knowledge, Conception, or Underſtanding is one Kind of Perfection, that Being who poſſeſſeth the whole Fullneſs of Perfection, muſt be abſolutely perfect in this Reſpect alſo. And as whatever is poſſible, or which does not imply a Contradiction, is alſo conceivable, and *vice verſâ*, his Power and his Knowledge muſt be exactly commenſurate: And as Power and Being ſtand alſo in exact Proportion to each other, his Knowledge and his Being muſt be exactly commenſurate too; that is, he muſt have a perfect Comprehenſion of his own Being and Perfections, and of the whole Extent of his Omnipotence, and conſequently of the Natures and Relations of all finite and poſſible Beings, which derive their Exiſtence or Poſſibility purely from it. But here we muſt be cautious not to imagine, we can arrive at any Thing like an adæquate or proper Conception of the Divine Omniſcience, from the bare Contemplation of human Knowledge. What little Knowledge we have is moſtly wrought out by long and tedious Inferences of one Thing from another, and even where we have intuitive Knowledge, we can conſider but one Truth at a Time; ſo that at beſt, where it is not ſucceſſive, it is extremely limited and partial: But there is no Reſemblance of this in the Divine Omniſcience. The All-perfect Being at one Glance comprehends the whole Extent of Being and Poſſibility, with all thoſe innumerable Relations and Truths which ſpring up out of it.

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XIII. The All-perfect Being is abſolutely ſimple and uncompounded, without Parts or Paſſions. For to ſuppoſe any Thing abſolutely Perfect or poſitively Infinite, which is compounded or made up of Parts, implieth a Contradiction, for theſe Reaſons. 1. Becauſe Number abſolutely Infinite is an Impoſſibility, as has been proved before. 2. Becauſe whatever is compounded or made up of Parts muſt be conceived as diviſible, and whatever is diviſible has this Property attending it, that its Parts may be all conceived as diſtinct Beings, exiſting ſeparately one from another; the Conſequence of which is, that each of them may be conceived as exiſting without the others; and if ſo, they may be all in their turns conceived as not exiſting; and conſequently none of them exiſts neceſſarily: For whatever exiſts neceſſarily, cannot be conceived as not exiſting without a Contradiction: And if no Part of ſuch a Being exiſts neceſſarily, the whole Being which is compounded and made up of thoſe Parts, cannot exiſt neceſſarily: But the All-perfect Being exiſts neceſſarily; therefore he is not compounded or made up of Parts.

Otherwiſe thus: If the infinitely perfect and ſelf-exiſtent Being be compounded of Parts, theſe Parts are either diſtinct from the Whole and from each other, or they are not. If they are not diſtinct, then are they not Parts; for this is the very Notion and Eſſence of a Part, that it is ſomething diſtinct from all the other Parts, and from the Whole: If they are diſtinct, then are they in Truth ſo many diſtinct Beings; for this too is what conſtitutes the very Notion of a diſtinct Being, that it is identified only with itſelf, and different from

from all other Beings whatſoever. Now theſe diſtinct Beings exiſt either neceſſarily or not: If they exiſt neceſſarily, they exiſt of themſelves too, or by the Neceſſity of their own Nature implying Exiſtence, (or elſe we run into the Abſurdity of an infinite neceſſary Succeſſion of unneceſſary Cauſes and Effects, which Suppoſition has been proved a Contradiction under Prop. V.) and conſequently there is not one, but many ſelf-exiſtent Beings, the contrary of which has been demonſtrated by Prop. VII. If they do not exiſt neceſſarily, and it implies no Contradiction that they ſhould be all removed out of Exiſtence, then neither does the Being which is compounded of them exiſt neceſſarily; and it implies no Contradiction that he ſhould not exiſt at all, which is contrary to the Suppoſition.

From hence it follows, not only that the whole material World, or the Sum of all ſenſible Objects taken together, however Infinite it may be ſuppoſed, is not the Supreme All-perfect Being, ſince it is evidently compounded and made up of Parts or diſtinct Beings; but alſo, that the whole Collection of finite Beings, though you ſhould ſuppoſe them to be an infinite Number of Modifications of infinitely numerous Attributes, (which implies a Contradiction too) cannot be identified with the abſolutely perfect Being, for this Reaſon, becauſe an infinite Number, if it could be ſuppoſed actually to exiſt, of finite, imperfect, unneceſſary, poſſible Beings, can never make up one abſolute, perfect and ſelf-exiſtent Being. And this was the grand leading Miſtake or Πρωτον Ψευδος of *Spinoza*. After he had eſtabliſhed the Neceſſity of admitting one ſelf-exiſtent abſolutely perfect Being, poſſeſſed of infi-

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nite Perfections or Attributes, he conſiders Extenſion and Cogitation as two of theſe Attributes: Wherein he firſt of all miſtakes in ſuppoſing thoſe two Properties to be Modes of the Divine Exiſtence, which evidently imply Limitation and Imperfection, as is clear from this among many other Reaſons, that ſuch imperfect Beings as we are have a perfect and adæquate Conception of them, which it would be a Contradiction to ſuppoſe, unleſs they were in their very Nature limited and imperfect. And from thence he proceeds to conſider all the finite Beings, which come within our Cognizance, as ſo many Modifications of one or other of theſe two Attributes, and the Sum of all theſe Modifications as identified with theſe two Attributes themſelves; and the Sum of all the Modifications of the infinitely numerous Attributes of the All-perfect Being, as identified with all thoſe Attributes, and conſequently with the All-perfect Being himſelf, who amounts to no more, in his Way of conſidering him, than to the Sum of all finite Beings taken together. By which means he has run into that very Abſurdity, to avoid which, he found himſelf at firſt obliged to admit a Self-exiſtent and All-perfect Being. For he does this to avoid ſuppoſing an infinite Succeſſion of Cauſes and Effects, which he expreſsly owns to imply a Contradiction; not upon the Account of the Abſurdity of ſuppoſing a Number actually Infinite; for he does not ſeem to imagine that Suppoſition to be an abſurd one; but becauſe he thinks it evident, that in an infinite Series of Cauſes and Effects ſucceeding each other, if none of the Beings in the whole Series exiſts neceſſarily, or implies Exiſtence in its Nature, then the whole Series itſelf cannot exiſt neceſſarily

ceſſarily, or imply Exiſtence in its Nature, and if it does not, that then it cannot exiſt at all; becauſe otherwiſe it would follow, that ſomething might exiſt without any Reaſon at all for its Exiſtence. But in the mean Time he did not conſider, that the ſame Reaſoning will hold full as ſtrongly, applied to any Kind of Infinity whatſoever, as to that of Succeſſion or Duration; and conſequently, that as no finite Being can exiſt from the Neceſſity of its own Nature, ſo no Being whatever, if it be barely commenſurate to, and identified with any Sum of finite Beings, infinite in Number if you pleaſe, can itſelf be ſelf-exiſtent: Whether theſe Beings be ſuppoſed all co-exiſting with each other at once, or ſucceeding one another from Eternity, makes not the leaſt Difference in the Caſe.

It muſt indeed be owned, that *Spinoza* very frequently aſſigns as the Cauſe of the Exiſtence of theſe infinite particular Modifications, the ſeveral Divine Attributes to which they reſpectively belong, expreſſing each in their ſeveral Kinds the infinite Divine Eſſence, or, which is the ſame, the Divine Nature itſelf, as conceived under theſe ſeveral Attributes: In ſaying which, he may be thought to conſider theſe particular Exiſtences rather as the Creatures, than as the Parts of the Divine Being. But beſides that the Truth ſometimes eſcapes him in Spite of all his Caution, as in the Corollary of Prop. XI. lib. ii. where he ſays expreſly, "*That the human Mind is a Part of the* "*infinite Underſtanding of God*; beſides that he admits in his fifth Epiſtle, that "*if any one Part* "*of Matter were annihilated, the whole Attribute* "*of Extenſion would inſtantly vaniſh*"; which proves clearly, that he conſidered every particular Modi-

Modification of Extenſion, as a neceſſary conſtituent Part of that Attribute, without which it could not be compleat and abſolute, nor conſequently exiſt at all: Beſides all this, I ſay, that if we compare the Corollary of Prop. XXV. with Prop. XXVIII. of the firſt Book, we may eaſily diſcover the whole Secret of his Syſtem. In the firſt cited Place, he tells us, "*That all particular* "*Beings are nothing but Modes, by which the Di-* "*vine Attributes are expreſſed in a certain finite* "*determined Manner:* And in Prop. XXVIII. he endeavours to demonſtrate, "*That no parti-* "*cular finite Being can exiſt or act, unleſs it be de-* "*termined to Exiſtence or Action,*" not by that abſolute Divine Attribute, of which the particular Being is only a Modification, but "*by ſome other* "*particular Finite Being, which muſt alſo in like* "*Manner be determined by a third, and ſo on* ad "infinitum. The Conſequence of which will be, if we carefully attend to it, that every Attribute being identified with all its Modifications taken together, each of the Divine abſolute ſelf-exiſtent Attributes will be no more than an Infinite Series of finite, particular, unneceſſary Modifications; the very Abſurdity he moſt ſtudiouſly endeavours to avoid. For as none of theſe particular Beings are determined to Exiſtence by that Divine Attribute, of which they are ſaid to be the Modifications, but merely by each other, ſucceſſively *ad infinitum*, neither of them conſequently exiſts by the Neceſſity of its own Nature, nor by the Determination of a ſelf-exiſtent Being; and if ſo, the whole Series itſelf, which is no more than the Sum of all of them taken together, and can have no Reality which does not exiſt in ſome or other of the particular Beings that compoſe it,

neither implies Exiſtence in its own Nature, nor derives it from any Being which does ſo, and conſequently, according to his own Principles, cannot have the leaſt Foundation in Nature for its Exiſtence.

It may not be improper to obſerve here, that this Syſtem of *Spinoza* has received too much Encouragement from ſeveral inaccurate Expreſſions, very common among the antient Theiſtical Philoſophers, and that not only among the *Junior Platoniſts*, but alſo among the *Pythagoreans*, and in the *Orphick* and *Ægyptian* Theology (from which laſt the Theology of all the others was moſt probably derived) ſuch as this, for Inſtance, that God is not only εν το Παν but alſo εν Παντα, the One all Things, with divers others amounting to the ſame Senſe, which may be ſeen collected together in *Dr. Cudworth*. Now though this and ſuch like Expreſſions were capable of being underſtood, and probably were underſtood by thoſe who firſt employed them, in a Senſe conſiſtent with the Simplicity of the Divine Nature; yet the firſt and moſt obvious Meaning is that groſs one, that all finite Beings are Parts of, and taken together are identified with, the one All-perfect Being, who is conſequently, in that Way of conſidering Things, no otherwiſe one, than as a Houſe, or a Ship, or any other compounded Syſtem, is one Thing. And accordingly *Dr. Cudworth* aſſigns the miſtaken Meaning of theſe Expreſſions, as one of the grand Sources of the Pagan Polytheiſm. For if God were all Things, it was a natural Concluſion, that all Things and every Thing was God, and conſequently, that at leaſt the greateſt Portions of this viſible World, ſuch as the Sun, Moon, Stars, Earth, Elements, *&c.* were to be worſhipped,

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as partaking of a larger Share of the Divine Nature, than other ſmaller and more inconſiderable Things. But that this Expreſſion may be underſtood alſo in a Senſe conſiſtent with the Divine Unity and Simplicity, is evident from hence, that there is no Reality or Perfection in any Creature whatſoever, but muſt be aſcribed alſo to God. For they are all derived from him; and it is certain, that nothing can give that which it has not. But then ſuch Reality muſt be aſcribed to him in a Manner proportioned to the Perfection of his Nature, that is to ſay, ſtripped and purged of all that Limitation and Imperfection with which it is neceſſarily attended in the Creature, and in a Manner which, like his Nature, is to us abſolutely incomprehenſible. And thus all that is of Reality and Perfection, even in Matter itſelf, muſt be aſcribed to God, but diveſted of all Imperfection, that is, of every Thing whereby it becomes the Object of our Senſes, and conſequently of every Thing whereby it can be apprehended or conceived by us, and in a Manner perfectly conſiſtent with the abſolute Simplicity of his Nature; and this perhaps can be done by us only in conceiving it under the Attribute of his Power. For it is certain, that whatever can come within our adæquate Conception, (and of Matter, as far as we have any Conception at all of it, that Conception is adæquate, and conſequently implies in its very Nature Limitation and Imperfection) or that of any other finite Being whatſoever, cannot be conſidered as a Part or Modification of the Divine Nature, but purely as the Effect and Creature of his Omnipotence. As to the other Branch of this Propoſition, that the Divine Being is without Paſſions as well as Parts, that is a neceſſary Conſe-

quence from the Immutability of his Nature: For Paſſion, in its very Notion, implies a Change in the Patient.

XIV. The All-perfect Being is Incorporeal. This is a neceſſary Conſequence of the Propoſition laſt foregoing. For Body, which comprehends all Being coming under the Cognizance of our Senſes, is indiſputably compounded of Parts, and always conceived as diviſible into Parts, and that indefinitely, without Stop or Boundary. Hence God is called a Spirit; which Expreſſion muſt be underſtood as a mere Negative, to mean that he is not Body; not that he is a Being of the ſame Kind with our own Spirits, from which, as well as from Body, his Perfections remove him at an infinite Diſtance.

XV. The All-perfect Being is abſolutely Happy. This Attribute neceſſarily follows from the Perfection of his Nature: For Being or Perfection, Power, Knowledge, and Happineſs are all exactly coincident: And whatever Being is limited or defective in any one of theſe Reſpects, muſt be neceſſarily ſo in all the reſt; ſo that to ſuppoſe the Happineſs of the All-perfect Being to be capable either of Addition or Diminution, is to ſuppoſe the ſame Thing of his Power, of his Knowledge, and even of his very Being and Perfection.

XVI. The All-perfect and Self-exiſtent Being is perfectly Free. For every Being that is neceſſitated, is neceſſitated either by ſomething without him, or by his own Nature: But the Self-exiſtent Being cannot be neceſſitated by any Thing without him, becauſe he is abſolutely independent of every Thing, and every Thing is dependent upon him; nor can he be neceſſitated to any of his Actions

tions by his own Nature, becauſe the Neceſſity ariſing from the Nature of any Being means no more than this, that ſuch a Being cannot do or omit doing any Thing, the Doing or Omiſſion of which ſtands in direct Contradiction to his Nature, ſince that would be to deny his own Nature, and to be another Thing than he really is, which is abſurd: But as to all Actions, in which there is implied no Contradiction to his Nature, whether he does them or not, no Neceſſity from his Nature can operate at all, becauſe nothing is neceſſary but what implies a Contradiction that it ſhould be otherwiſe. Thus the Divine Being cannot deſtroy himſelf, becauſe that carrieth with it a Contradiction to his own Nature, which implies Exiſtence: But as to the Production or Annihilation of Finite Beings, his Nature implies no Neceſſity either way; it implies no more than a Power to do either. For the Nature of finite Beings doth not imply neceſſary, but only poſſible Exiſtence; and the Nature of the Self-exiſtent Being does not imply the Exiſtence, but merely the Poſſibility of finite Beings; for Exiſtence is abſolute and compleat without them, and their Non-exiſtence does not in the leaſt deny or deſtroy the Perfection of his Nature; and to ſuppoſe the contrary, is quite to reverſe the Order of Nature, and to make the Self-exiſtent abſolutely perfect Being, and Firſt Cauſe, dependent for his Exiſtence and Perfections, on the Exiſtence of finite, imperfect, and, in their own Nature, unneceſſary Creatures. All therefore that the Nature of the Self-exiſtent Being neceſſarily implies with reſpect to the Exiſtence of finite Beings, is merely no more than a Power in him to do every Thing that is poſſible, that is, which doth not imply a Contradiction:

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Conſequently, there is no Neceſſity in Nature, either for or againſt the Production of ſuch Beings: From whence it follows, that the Self-exiſtent Being was abſolutely free in the Production of them, and, for the very ſame Reaſon, is ſo in every other Action that can be conceived.

And here lies the other grand Miſtake of *Spinoza*, that from the Neceſſity of the Divine Exiſtence, neceſſarily follows the Neceſſity of the Exiſtence of all poſſible finite Beings. *Ex neceſſitate naturæ divinæ infinita, infinitis modis ſequi debent.* And in ſaying this, he was but conſiſtent with himſelf: His Syſtem required it; for after the firſt and grand Miſtake of making the All-perfect Self-exiſtent Being no more than the Sum of all finite Beings taken together, it became neceſſary for him to find out ſome Way of making every finite Being conceivable to exiſt neceſſarily, or elſe the Infinite Self-exiſtent Being might poſſibly (and if he poſſibly might, he muſt) want ſomething to compleat his Exiſtence. Now there are but two Ways of conceiving any Being to exiſt neceſſarily, either from the Neceſſity of its own Nature, as implying Exiſtence, or as an Effect neceſſarily flowing from a Self-exiſtent Cauſe. The firſt of theſe would not ſerve his Purpoſe; for the Conſequence of it would be, that every Thing that exiſts, exiſts from the Neceſſity of its own Nature, as implying Exiſtence, which he well enough ſaw would be a moſt manifeſt Contradiction: He therefore took the other and only Way left, that of making every Thing that exiſts to exiſt as an Effect, neceſſarily flowing from the Nature of the one neceſſary and Self-exiſtent Being. But he did not conſider, that when he had

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once introduced this Neceſſity into the Univerſe, there would not only follow from it that Conſequence which he readily acknowledged, that nothing in Nature could be produced in any other Order or Manner than that in which it is produced, ſo that it as much implies a Contradiction, that I ſhould not be this Moment writing, as that the three Angles of a Triangle ſhould be greater or leſs than two right ones, or even that the Self-exiſtent Being himſelf ſhould not exiſt; but alſo this other Conſequence, much more terrible than the former, and indeed the moſt ſhocking Contradiction to all Nature that can be conceived: That from the very Moment this Neceſſity takes Place, it puts an abſolute Stop to all Action, Paſſion, Motion, and Change in the Univerſe, and the whole World becomes one ſolid Rock of Adamant. For if the Exiſtence of all Beings in the Univerſe neceſſarily follows this Moment, from the Nature of the neceſſary and Self-exiſtent Being, it as neceſſarily follows, that they exiſt what they now are, and in the preciſe Manner they now do, and no otherwiſe; for indeterminate Exiſtence applied to a finite determined Being is a Contradiction: And if all Things neceſſarily exiſt juſt what they now are, then it is impoſſible that they ever have exiſted, or for the future ever can exiſt, in any other Manner whatſoever: All Poſſibility of a Change is abſolutely denied, and every Thing is at a Stand: For the Self-exiſtent Being is always invariably the ſame, and therefore the Effects which neceſſarily follow from his Nature, muſt by the ſame Neceſſity be for-ever the ſame too. Such are the Conſequences which follow from confounding and identifying Power and Neceſſity; and as terrible are the Conſequences of either Extreme, whether

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you ſuppoſe nothing but Neceſſity in the World, or nothing but Chance: If you ſuppoſe nothing but Neceſſity, from that very Moment the World becomes one ſolid Lump of Ice or Stone: If you ſuppoſe nothing but Chance, or indeed, that any Thing may exiſt without a Reaſon for its Exiſtence (for if you ſuppoſe one Thing, you may as well ſuppoſe every Thing) then is the World turned into one looſe Heap of Sand, which ſlides away under you, if ever you pretend to reſt upon it, and is liable to be blown quite away by every idle Guſt of Wind: Whereas, on the contrary, from a due Mixture of Neceſſity with Liberty, Neceſſity of Exiſtence in the firſt Cauſe, as the Foundation, and Liberty of Action ſpringing up out of it, Reaſon finds Ground to fix its Foot upon; and that beautiful Order and Variety we perceive in the World around us, becomes conſiſtent with it.

To all this I know very well that it may be anſwered in favour of *Spinoza*, that all that Change and Variety under which the Univerſe is conceived by us, is the neceſſary Conſequence of our Exiſtence in Time, and ſucceſſively; but that to the Self-exiſtent and All-perfect Being, in whoſe Exiſtence there can be no Succeſſion, all Things ſtand quite otherwiſe. As, to him, there can be no Paſt or Future, ſo there can be no Change nor Variety, but all Things are at once to him actually preſent, and the ſame. And this is what is inſinuated by *Spinoza* himſelf, but quite inconſiſtently with his Principles: For when you have once admitted Succeſſion into the Nature of the All-perfect Being, in any one Reſpect, it will force itſelf into it in every other. When Succeſſion is introduced into his Immenſity, by ſuppoſing it

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to be compounded of an infinite Number of ſucceſſive Modifications, it cannot afterwards be kept out of his Eternity, but that will be a Duration too compounded of an infinite Number of ſucceſſive Moments. For if every one of the finite Modifications, of which the infinite All-perfect Being is made up, exiſts ſucceſſively, as *Spinoza* muſt admit that it does; then the Whole or Sum which is compoſed of them, muſt exiſt ſucceſſively too, or otherwiſe, the Whole is not the Sum of all its Parts taken together, but ſomething abſolutely different from them, which implies a Contradiction: And conſequently, a Succeſſion of Parts in the Immenſity of the Self-exiſtent Being, neceſſarily implies a Succeſſion of Moments in his Duration.

But to ſhew ſtill farther, how little *Spinoza* is intitled to the Uſe of the abovementioned Argument in his Defence, I ſhall take notice of one plain Contradiction, which the Force of Truth and Nature has extorted from him. For whereas he firſt of all aſſerts, in Prop. XVI. Lib. I. "*That* "*from the Neceſſity of the divine Nature, infinite* "*Things in infinite Manners, that is to ſay all* "*Things that can poſſibly be conceived by an infinite* "*Underſtanding, muſt follow*; and in Prop. "XXXV. Lib. I. "*That whatever can be con-* "*ceived to be within the Compaſs of the Divine* "*Power doth neceſſarily exiſt.*" To which may be added what he ſays under Prop. XXXI. Lib. I. where, having made uſe of this Expreſſion, "*the* "*Divine Intellect actually exerted,*" he adds, "*that* "*he uſes it only for the Sake of Clearneſs; and not* "*that he admits any Intellect not actually exerted,* "*and potential only:*" Notwithſtanding all this, when he comes to conſider particular Exiſtences or

Modifications, as he terms them, in Prop. VIII. Lib. II. he tells us, " *That the Ideas of particular Be-*
" *ings or Modes not exiſting, muſt in the ſame*
" *Manner be comprehended in the infinite Idea of God,*
" (or, which is the ſame, in the Divine Intellect)
" *as the formal Eſſences of thoſe particular Beings*
" *or Modes are contained in the Divine Attributes.*"
And in the Corollary to that Propoſition, he has theſe expreſs Words: " *Hence it follows, that as*
" *long as particular Beings have no other Exiſ-*
" *tence, than as they are comprehended in the Divine*
" *Attributes, their objective Eſſences or Ideas have*
" *no Exiſtence farther than as the infinite Idea of*
" *God exiſts; and when particular Beings are ſaid*
" *to exiſt, not only as comprehended in the Divine*
" *Attributes, but alſo as they are ſaid to partake of*
" *Duration, their Ideas will alſo imply or carry*
" *with them that Exiſtence, by which they are ſaid*
" *to partake of Duration.*" In which Words he plainly diſtinguiſheth between two Kinds of Exiſtence of particular Beings; one, whereby they are ſaid to partake of Duration, which is in that Caſe always implied in the Idea of ſuch Beings, which is as much as to ſay, that in that Caſe they are conceived by the Divine Underſtanding as exiſting; and this is exactly the ſame with what is commonly called actual Exiſtence: The other, when neither the Ideas of ſuch Beings imply any ſuch Exiſtence, nor can be ſaid to exiſt themſelves, but in Virtue of the Exiſtence of the infinite Idea of God (or, which amounts to the ſame, in Virtue of the Idea of the Divine Omnipotence exiſting) nor the Beings themſelves have any other Exiſtence than as they are comprehended under the Divine Attributes, which Attributes conſtituting the Divine Eſſence, with which his Omnipotence

nipotence by Prop. XXXIV. Lib. I. is perfectly identified, is as much as to ſay, that they have no other Exiſtence than as they are comprehended within the Extent of the Divine Omnipotence; which Kind of Exiſtence is exactly the ſame Thing with what is uſually termed poſſible Exiſtence. So that here we have *Spinoza* acknowledging, that ſome particular Beings or Modifications have a poſſible Exiſtence only, which if it be true, his whole Syſtem is thereby overturned at once. For then it cannot be true, that infinite Things in infinite Manners, that is to ſay, all Things that can poſſibly be conceived by an infinite Underſtanding, muſt follow from the Neceſſity of the Divine Nature, ſince here are confeſſedly Beings whoſe Exiſtence is poſſible, and therefore certainly can be poſſibly conceived by an infinite Underſtanding, which do not always follow from the Neceſſity of the Divine Nature, becauſe it is allowed that they do not always actually exiſt, which they muſt do, if they followed from the Divine Nature, with the ſame Neceſſity as that Nature exiſts. For it was equally true, that the Divine Nature actually exiſts, a thouſand Years ago, and will be ſo a thouſand Years hence, as it is this preſent Moment; and if the actual Exiſtence of theſe Beings follows from the Neceſſity of the Divine Nature, they muſt alſo as neceſſarily have actually exiſted a thouſand Years ago, and will do ſo a thouſand Years hence, and ſo backwards and forwards through Duration indefinitely, as they do at any one Moment that can be aſſigned. In the ſame Manner, if there are ſome Beings whoſe Exiſtence is only poſſible, it will not be true, that whatever can be conceived to be within the Extent of the Divine Power, doth neceſſarily exiſt; ſince poſſible Beings are certainly within the Extent

of the Divine Power, and yet, as their Being is merely poſſible, they cannot neceſſarily exiſt. And laſtly, ſince, according to him, the Order and Connection of Ideas is exactly the ſame as the Order and Connection of Things, there muſt of Conſequence be ſome Intellect Potential only and not Actual, ſince there are ſome Things or Beings, whoſe Exiſtence is Potential only and not Actual. From all which it muſt evidently appear, that no Finite Being can be the neceſſary Conſequence of the Divine Omnipotence; for if it were, grant but the Cauſe, and the Effect neceſſarily follows. Now the Cauſe, the Divine Omnipotence, muſt unavoidably be granted throughout indefinite Duration, and conſequently the Effect muſt as neceſſarily attend it throughout that Duration, and it would imply as great a Contradiction to aſſert, that any one Effect of that Omnipotence, or, which is the ſame, any one poſſible finite Being, does not actually exiſt in any one aſſignable Moment of that indefinite Duration, as it would be to aſſert the ſame Thing of the Divine Omnipotence: From which it clearly follows, that nothing ever can have exiſted, or ever poſſibly can exiſt for the future, in any other Manner than it doth at this Inſtant, which is one of the greateſt Contradictions that can be conceived.

And now from this Liberty of Action in the firſt Cauſe, may be deduced the Poſſibility of Liberty in finite Beings, that is, that Liberty communicated to a finite Being doth not imply a Contradiction: For, as it has been proved, the Divine Power extends to every Thing that doth not imply a Contradiction. Now, in the firſt Place, Liberty doth not, in its own Nature and Conception, imply a Contradiction, for then it could poſſibly

poſſibly belong to no Being at all; but it has been already ſhewn that the Supreme Being is perfectly free: And for the very ſame Reaſon it is not inconſiſtent with Neceſſity of Exiſtence, the Divine Exiſtence being abſolutely neceſſary, whereas that of all Finite Beings is only hypothetically ſo, that is, neceſſary upon the Suppoſition of the Divine Will determining their Exiſtence: Nor in the laſt Place doth it imply a Contradiction to the Nature of any Being conſidered purely as Finite, provided it be not carried farther than the Powers of ſuch a Being extend; as, for Inſtance, it would be a Contradiction to ſuppoſe a finite Being to be at Liberty to do every Thing that is abſolutely poſſible, becauſe his Power doth not reach ſo far (ſuch a Power being the peculiar Attribute of the One Self-exiſtent Being). But a Liberty in any Being to do or omit any Action, which lies within the Extent of his Power, cannot imply a Contradiction to any Thing; not to the Nature of the Supreme Being, for to him the Exiſtence or Non-exiſtence of any Thing Finite is not neceſſary, but merely poſſible; nor to other finite Beings around him, for his Sphere of Power is ſuppoſed to extend no farther, than as it is not overpowered and comptrolled by them; nor to his own Nature, for to do the Action is plainly agreeable to it, becauſe he has the Power to do it, and to omit it cannot imply a Contradiction to or deny his Nature, becauſe then his Nature would be denied and deſtroyed, if any ſtronger Power ſhould prevent him from doing it, which is ſo far from being true, that, in ſuch a Caſe, his Nature would remain exactly the ſame in itſelf as it was before, it would be only comptrolled and hindered from exerting itſelf *ad extra*,

for

for ſo long Time as that Reſtraint continued upon it. For, to ſay the Truth, if in any Being, the omitting any Action were a Contradiction to his Nature, all the Power in the Univerſe could not hinder him from performing it, without deſtroying his Nature; ſince, in that Caſe, ſuch an Action muſt be neceſſarily implied in and follow from his Nature, or elſe the Omiſſion of it could not be a Contradiction to it; and therefore, upon a Suppoſition of the Exiſtence of the Nature, whatever is implied in it, and follows from it, muſt neceſſarily exiſt with it: For to ſuppoſe that any Thing could hinder it, is to ſuppoſe that ſomething could make it not to exiſt at the ſame Time that it exiſts, and is the ſame Abſurdity as would follow from aſſerting, that upon the Suppoſition of the Exiſtence of a Triangle, ſomething can poſſibly hinder its three Angles from being equal to two right ones. And therefore, to ſay that no Finite Being can have a Power to do any Thing, which doth not follow from its Nature with ſuch a Neceſſity as hath been deſcribed, is indeed ſaying that no finite Being can have any Power at all: For what follows from any Thing with ſuch a Neceſſity, is indeed no more than the very Nature of that Thing itſelf under a particular Conſideration; whereas Power reſpects only Things that are poſſible, and not Things that are neceſſary. And to aſſert it to be a Contradiction for any finite Being to be poſſeſſed of finite Power, at the ſame Time that it is admitted to be a Contradiction for the perfect infinite Being not to be poſſeſſed of perfect infinite Power, is itſelf a Contradiction; ſince Power and Being are always in proportion to each other; and if all Degrees of Power imply a Contradiction, perfect Power muſt needs imply a perfect Contradiction.

And

And thus Liberty in finite Creatures, and conſequently human Liberty, being ſhewn to be poſſible, for the real Exiſtence of it we muſt appeal to Fact and Experience. And that has determined ſo ſtrongly in favour of it, that even thoſe who deny it are obliged to own, that the Appearances are againſt them; and that if Man were really free, the Arguments from Experience and what we feel could not be ſtronger and fuller than they are at preſent. There have, it is true, been divers ſpecious Arguments produced, in all Ages, to elude the Force of theſe; but as, all the Appearances in the World contradicting them, they have had very little general Effect, either upon the Perſuaſions or Conduct of Mankind, ſo have they already frequently received a full and ſufficient Anſwer; for which Reaſon, as alſo becauſe ſuch a Diſquiſition doth not ſo properly belong to the preſent Subject, I ſhall not enter into the Examination of them in this Place. One Difficulty indeed, as having ſome Connection with the Argument I am treating of, I think myſelf obliged to take notice of; and that is this. It is ſuppoſed, that the Contingency of human Actions, which follows upon the Suppoſition of Liberty, is inconſiſtent with the Divine Attribute of Preſcience. Now this Difficulty will be obviated, if we conſider the Nature of the Divine Preſcience. The Word *Preſcience*, as attributed to the Divinity, doth not ſignify any real particular Attribute of the Divine Nature, but ſtands only for the Attribute of Omniſcience, as applied to certain particular Objects, and brought down to our Manner of conceiving Things. As we exiſt in Time, and ſucceſſively, we cannot poſſibly apprehend any Thing Finite, but as exiſting in the ſame Manner.

Hence

Hence to us, every Thing was once Future, then Preſent, and afterwards Paſt: But to the Divine Being, in whoſe Exiſtence, nor Attributes, there is no Succeſſion, every Thing ſtands in a quite different Manner. To him all Things, that to us are Paſt, Preſent, and Future, are at once actually preſent. To him therefore nothing can exiſt as contingent, becauſe nothing can exiſt as Future. An Action that will be a thouſand Years hence Future, ſtands to him now exactly in the ſame Manner as an Action that is paſt a thouſand Years ago. And therefore as an Action that is paſt or preſent, may be certainly known by us, and conſequently the Contingency of it actually deſtroyed, without in the leaſt affecting the Liberty of the Agent who did it; ſo the certain Knowledge the Divine Being has of an Action that is to us Future, though to him it deſtroys the Contingency of it, yet as it ſtands to him exactly in the ſame Manner as an Action that is to us paſt or preſent, it cannot poſſibly any more affect the Liberty of the Agent, than our preſent Knowledge of any paſt Action could influence the Liberty of the Agent who did it. Knowledge in Truth hath no Manner of Efficiency upon the Thing known; that remains exactly the ſame that it is, whether it be known or not. For a Thing is not becauſe it is known, but it is known becauſe it is; and therefore the Knowledge that any Thing is, in a Being to whom nothing was nor will be, but every Thing, that to a finite Being was or will be, actually is, makes no more Alteration in the Nature of that Thing, nor is that Knowledge ſtrictly conſidered, any more the Cauſe of it than our knowing that any Thing was, or Perception that it actually is, makes any Alteration in it, or at all contributes to its Exiſtence

Exiſtence. And this ſeems to be the only Way of accounting for that Difficulty, of which *Dr. Clarke* ſeems to have given a very inſufficient Solution: Whatever now actually is, is certain, and it is not only now certain, but it was Yeſterday, and from Eternity, certain that it would be; but whatever is certain implies Neceſſity, or elſe it could not be certain; therefore every Thing is neceſſary. Now the Word *Certainty* means no more than the actual Perception of the real preſent Exiſtence of any Thing; a Perception that it really is or exiſts: Thus when I am certain of the Equality of the three Angles of a Triangle to two right ones, I have not a Perception barely that they were formerly equal, or that they will be equal, but that they are ſo, and ſo in every other Inſtance of Knowledge: And in the ſame Manner when I actually perceive the Exiſtence of any Thing, I am certain that it is. But I am not abſolutely or properly certain of the former or future Exiſtence of any Thing; my Knowledge with regard to that can be only Memory or Conjecture. Now Certainty is a Term purely relative, for a Thing which is certain to no Being in the World, is not certain at all; and therefore this Neceſſity we perceive in ourſelves of admitting that what is now certain was ſo from Eternity, abſolutely ſuppoſes, and unavoidably leads us to the Acknowledgment of the Exiſtence of ſome Being, to whom, what is now, was from Eternity certain; that is, of a Being, who from Eternity had an actual Perception of its Exiſtence as preſent, or, which is the ſame, to whom from Eternity it was as much preſent, and perceived as ſuch, as it is now preſent to us, and perceived by us. But this mere Knowledge has not the

leaſt Efficiency upon the Thing or Action perceived; for, as it has been ſaid, it doth not exiſt becauſe it is known, but it is known becauſe it exiſts. Exiſtence doth not follow from Knowledge, but Knowledge and Certainty from Exiſtence, Knowledge and Certainty being indeed nothing but a Perception of that Exiſtence, and conſequently from the Certainty of any Thing it doth not at all follow that it is neceſſary, for the Nature of the Thing is not at all altered by the Certainty of it, and all that can be concluded from its being certain or perceived is, that it exiſts; no Neceſſity at all from Cauſe to Effect, but only the Neceſſity that what is, is; which is equally true of the freeſt Action that can be conceived as of the moſt neceſſary.

Thus far we have proceeded in the Proof of the natural Attributes of the Divine Being, but from the very Moment Liberty and Intelligence are ſuppoſed, there ſprings up a new Set of Ideas, ſuch as theſe, Wiſdom and Folly, Juſtice and Injuſtice, moral Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, which, as they are ſo many particular Manners of conſidering the Actions of free and intelligent Beings, founded upon their Conformity to ſome Rule, ſo the Attributes of the Divine Nature implying ſuch a Conformity, commonly called the Moral Attributes, can neither be conceived to exiſt, nor can conſequently be proved, with the ſame Neceſſity as the natural Attributes, but with a Neceſſity conſiſtent with perfect Liberty, commonly called a Moral Neceſſity.

XVII. The All-perfect Being is perfectly Wiſe, Good, Juſt, True, and Holy. It has been already proved that there is an intelligent Being

ing poſſeſſed of perfect and abſolute Power, and at the ſame Time perfectly and abſolutely free. It has alſo been proved from Reaſon, that finite intelligent Beings, endued with Freedom proportioned to the Limits of their Power, are poſſible; and it appears manifeſtly from Fact and Experience that ſuch Beings actually do exiſt. Now the natural Queſtion that ariſeth from hence is this: Since the ſupreme and other intelligent Beings have this Freedom proportioned to their Power, of acting or omitting to act, or acting in this or the other Manner, without being determined either way by the Neceſſity of their own Nature, or by any Thing external, what Rule or Principle is there left to direct their Actions? Or is there none at all, but their Actions are all fortuitous and at random? I anſwer, not the latter, ſince it is directly repugnant to the Nature of a conſcious, intelligent, free, and active Being, to be continually exerting itſelf in Action without knowing why. There is one Rule ſtill left, which is the natural Conſequence of all intelligent Nature, and which is the only Rule conceivable to ſuch a Nature, and that is Reaſon. And from the Suppoſition of this Principle ariſes all Moral Agency, for Liberty with Reaſon to direct it, conſtitutes the very Eſſence of a Moral Agent; and it is as great an Abſurdity, to ſuppoſe any Thing to exiſt in the Moral World, without a Moral Reaſon founded in the Nature of a Moral Agent, as it would be to ſuppoſe any Thing in the natural World to exiſt, without ſome Reaſon in Nature for its Exiſtence. Now this Principle of Reaſon in the All-perfect Being muſt be in exact Proportion to his Nature, that is, it muſt be perfect, both as it implies Perfection in the very Notion

and Conception of it, and as it muſt be fully commenſurate to that which is to be guided and directed by it; that is to ſay, to perfect and abſolute Power. And by the ſame Way of Reaſoning it will follow, that in all finite Moral Agents there muſt be a Share of this Principle, proportioned to the Extent of their Power, for the Guidance and Direction of it; or elſe there will be ſomething wanting to fill up the whole Meaſure of their Nature, and conſequently they will be imperfect; and that not merely in Proportion to unbounded Perfection, but in Proportion to what their own Nature will really admit of; and conſequently they cannot be the Workmanſhip and Creatures of the All-perfect Being, ſince thoſe muſt all expreſs the Perfection of their Author, as far as their limited Natures are capable of it.

But here we are ſtopped ſhort at once by Fact and Experience directly contradicting us: For it is evident, that Man is not endued with a Proportion of Reaſon ſuited to the Extent of his Power, but that one comes vaſtly ſhort of the other. Where by Reaſon, I do not mean idle Speculation floating in the Brain, but a practical Principle influencing the Conduct in a moral Way. The univerſal Complaint of the Degeneracy of Mankind, and of the Prevalency of Vice and Corruption in the World, makes it abundantly manifeſt, that this Principle has not in the preſent Circumſtances of human Nature its proper Proportion and Influence. Whence then doth this proceed? Πoθεν το Κακον? To which all the Anſwer I can make is ingenuouſly to confeſs my Ignorance. The preſent univerſal Degeneracy of Man, and a Conception of a more perfect State which naturally belongs to him, are Truths ſo evident, that the

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Generality of Mankind, in all Ages, have acknowledged their Conviction of them; but whence proceeded theſe miſerable Circumſtances, in which we at preſent find ourſelves, is a Queſtion to which no ſatisfactory Anſwer, that I know of, has yet been given, and, I doubt, we have not ſufficient Principles to bear us out in giving a full and complete Anſwer to it. All we can be ſure of is, only in general, this; that Man came perfect out of the Hands of his Creator, or otherwiſe he could not have been the Work of a perfect Being, and that his preſent Imperfection and Depravity proceeded entirely from himſelf, and a wrong Uſe of his Liberty: But how to account for this wrong Uſe of his Liberty is the Difficulty. All that the Scriptures inform us about it is, that this was at firſt occaſioned by the Deceit of an evil Spirit: But this is only removing the Difficulty one Step farther off, for the ſame Queſtion will ſtill recur, whence proceeded the Degeneracy of this Spirit? And how came he to be Evil? Nor do I apprehend neither that the preſent Corruption of Mankind can be fully accounted for purely from the Conſideration of Liberty, though that muſt undoubtedly bear a great Share in whatever the Account is that can truly be given of it; ſince it ſeems, that to the Perfection of every Moral Agent ſuch a Proportion of Reaſon naturally belongs, as is equal to the Extent of its Power, and ſufficient to influence and direct its Actions, in an uniform and conſtant Tendency towards the End and Perfection of its Being, and that in a Manner intirely conſiſtent with its Liberty, from which the moſt natural Conſequence ſeems to be, not Degeneracy, though that muſt be allowed to be phyſically poſſible, but a Kind of moral Neceſſity.

ceſſity of Perſeverance, ſuch as is admitted with reſpect to the Angels at preſent, and we are aſſured will be the Caſe with the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect hereafter. But though we are unable to account for this Appearance that ſtands in our Way, and it muſt be allowed to be a conſiderable Difficulty, yet ſtill it is but a Difficulty; it is but one Appearance, againſt all the other Appearances in Nature, in the ſtrongeſt Manner concurring in Oppoſition to it; it is at moſt but an Argument *ad ignorantiam*, and conſequently can have no Degree of Force to overturn or weaken the Truth of a Principle, which is founded upon the ſtrongeſt and moſt cogent Demonſtrations. And probably enough this very Ignorance of ours is kindly intended us as a Benefit by the Author of our Nature, and may be highly conducive towards the Accompliſhment of the great Work of our Reſtoration; concerning which, what the Scriptures reveal to us is perfectly conſonant to Reaſon, *viz.* That our Recovery is a Work tranſcending all human Power to effect, and that, to give our Nature that Perfection, which properly belonged to it, but it now wants, to ſupply and compleat our Reaſon, and reſtore it to its proper Place, the Principality, or το Ηγημονικον in our Conſtitution, can poſſibly be the Work of no leſs a Power, than that of the ſame divine and holy Spirit, by whom Man was at firſt created perfect.

As to Phyſical Evil, that ſeems to be a natural Conſequence to moral; and the Account which is given of it in the Scriptures ſeems perfectly reaſonable: That when Man was once fallen from the Integrity and Perfection in which he was created, when Reaſon had loſt the Reins, and was

was joſtled out of its Throne, he was turned out immediately from the Garden of *Eden* into the wide World, from a State of Happineſs ſuited to his former Perfection, but quite inconſiſtent with the wretched Circumſtances he had now reduced himſelf to, into a State wherein he was made ſubject to Vanity, Miſery, and Death, the only State conſiſtent with the preſent Condition of his Nature, and probably the very beſt, with reſpect to his own Intereſt and Happineſs upon the Whole, in which he could be placed. For Pain ſeems to be intended in general only as a Supplement to the Imperfection of our Reaſon. That Power is at preſent ſo defective in us, that even the Care of our Intereſt in this preſent Life could not be ſafely truſted to it. Pain therefore ſeems to have been made the natural Conſequence of every Tranſgreſſion againſt them, for this very Purpoſe, to be a Kind of continual Spur in our Natures, to oblige us to take the proper Care of them, and to regulate our Actions in a Conſiſtency with them. And as I believe there cannot be one Inſtance aſſigned, where Pain hath not either immediately or remotely this Tendency, to oblige us to provide for the Preſervation and Welfare of our being here, ſo with reſpect to thoſe Inſtances of it, where it takes Place in Virtue of this general Law, without appearing to have been the natural Conſequence of any ill Uſe we have made of our Liberty, it doth not ſeem conceivable that it could be prevented, by any extraordinary Interpoſition of Omnipotence, without overturning all the Laws and Order by which the World is governed, and introducing ſuch a Confuſion into the Adminiſtration of it, as would leave no room for Reaſoning, in a great Meaſure

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ſubvert all Moral Agency, and thereby bring upon Mankind ten thouſand Times more Evil than would be removed by it. All that can be reaſonably concluded from thoſe Exceptions to the general Adminiſtration of the World, of Vice leading ſometimes to the Reward and Happineſs which properly belongs only to Virtue, and Virtue on the other Hand to the Puniſhment and Miſery which is due only to Vice (though it might be eaſily ſhewn, that thoſe Inſtances are in no Proportion ſo frequent as they are commonly apprehended to be) amounts only to this, *viz.* a ſtrong Probability, that the preſent Scene of Things is not the only one we are concerned in, but that it will be ſucceeded by a State of Retribution, where all theſe Inequalities will be exactly compenſated, where Virtue will finally and upon the Whole be rewarded with Happineſs, and where Vice will certainly meet with that Miſery for its Puniſhment which it deſerves.

But to return now from this long Digreſſion, into which the Appearance of Evil in the World, natural and moral, croſſing the Courſe of my Argument, has led me. It has been proved that the Divine Being conſtantly and invariably directs all his Actions, by his own moſt perfect Reaſon; from which Principle all his moral Attributes may moſt eaſily be deduced. For they are indeed no other than ſo many particular Conſiderations of that perfect Reaſon. Thus the Divine Wiſdom is properly that Reaſon, conſidered as directing and proportioning every Thing to one grand End, which, as in the Divine Being it cannot be his own Happineſs, ſince that is abſolutely incapable of Increaſe and Dimunition; nor properly and ultimately the Happineſs of his Creatures, ſince that

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is inverting the Order of Things, and referring the Creator down to his Creature, not referring his Creatures up to him; ſo it can be no other than what the Scriptures inform us it is, his own Glory; that is to ſay, the Manifeſtation of his Perfections, in which the Happineſs of his Creatures is alſo neceſſarily involved. For the Conſequence of perfect Wiſdom, directing every Thing up to this great End, will be, that the whole Creation, and every Part of it, will be as perfect as its Nature will admit of. Every created Being will have all that Perfection which its Nature is capable of, and the Relation and Proportion in which it ſtands to the Whole will permit. For to ſuppoſe otherwiſe, would be to ſuppoſe that great End not to be fulfilled and completed, and the whole Creation, and every Being in it, would then fall ſhort of being the Manifeſtations of Perfection, and would indeed be Manifeſtations of Imperfection; and as the Means would not be in full Proportion to the End, could not be conceived as the Work of perfect Power directed by perfect Wiſdom. It is certain then that all the Works of God, as they came out of his Hand were perfect; how ſome of them, by a wrong Uſe of their Liberty, came to loſe in great meaſure that Perfection, as it is evident they have done, is a Difficulty, for the Solution of which in all Probability, we muſt ſubmit to wait, till we are admitted into a fuller and completer View of the Divine Adminiſtration, in ſome other State. And as the Divine Wiſdom is perfect Reaſon, conſidered as ordering and diſpoſing all Things in reference to that great and ultimate End above explained; ſo the Divine Goodneſs is the ſame Reaſon, conſidered as the Cauſe of Happineſs to its Creatures, as beſtow-

ing upon them all that Perfection and Happineſs which their Nature is capable of receiving. And the Divine Juſtice is the ſame Reaſon, conſidered under the Notion of Moral Proportion, as diſtributing to Moral Agents ſuch Shares of Happineſs or Miſery, as are exactly proportioned, to the right or wrong Uſe they have made of their Liberty, and to the Condition and Circumſtances of their Nature conſequent upon it. For there is exactly the ſame Repugnance to perfect Reaſon, that Vice ſhould be happy, as that Virtue ſhould be miſerable: And the Conſiſtency of Vice and Happineſs upon the Whole of Things, has full as evident a Tendency, as that of Virtue and Miſery, to remove that Reaſon off its Throne, and to deny it to be the preſiding and governing Principle in the World. The Divine Truth alſo is no more than the ſame Reaſon, conſidered under the Notion of Immutability, ſo that what God once affirms, will be always and every where true, in the ſame Caſe and Circumſtances. And laſtly the Divine Holineſs is the ſame Reaſon, conſidered as ſeated on its Throne, and challenging the utmoſt Reverence and Adoration from all its Creatures. As therefore that Reaſon, which is the Rule by which the Divine Being invariably directs all his Actions, and governs the whole Creation, is perfect, even as his Nature is perfect, ſo conſequently, all thoſe moral Attributes which we aſcribe to him, of Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Juſtice, Truth, and Holineſs, being but ſo many ſeveral Manners of conceiving it, and all perfectly identified with it, muſt alſo be perfect.

And now, from this View of the Divine Nature and Attributes, compared with the preſent Conſtitution and Circumſtances of human Nature,

ture, it might be no very difficult Taſk to deduce the real Grounds and Obligation of all human Duty and Virtue. In doing which it would be alſo neceſſary, to examine into thoſe ſeveral partial Principles, which have of late with much Induſtry been aſſigned by their reſpective Patrons, as the only ſolid and complete Foundation upon which Moral Obligation can be ſupported, and at the ſame Time to ſhew, that neither of them ſeparately, nor all of them taken together, without a Reference up to the Divinity, as the great Law-giver, are ſufficient either to ſupport the Weight of Moral Obligation, or to complete the proper Moral Excellence of human Actions. A Tract to this Purpoſe has lain by me for ſome Time finiſhed, but it may perhaps be not unadviſeable, to wait what Reception the Foundation may meet with, before we proceed to the Superſtructure.

*F I N I S.*

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*E R R A T A.*

PAGE 15. Line 24. read *together*. p. 25. l. 5. *inſtead of its*, r. *it*. p. 28. l. 9. and 13. r. *increaſeable*. p. 35. l. 15. for *I*, r. *It*. p. 35. l. 15. r. *ſenſible*. p. 38. l. 19. put a Comma after *exiſt*, and dele the Comma after *it*. p. 37. l. 14. dele the Comma after *implies*, and place it after *it*. p. 39. l. 27. r. *ſenſible*. p. 71. l. 15. r. *Intereſts*.

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